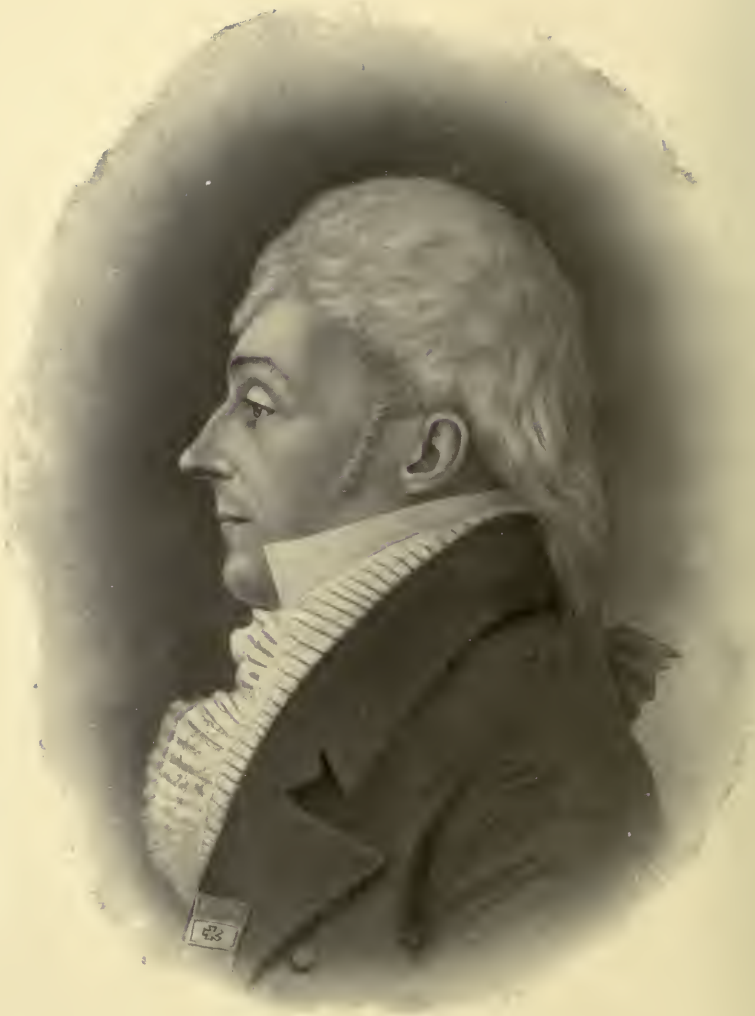

MAINE DE BIRAN.

From Lévy-Bruhl's *History of Modern Philosophy in France.*—Courtesy of the Open Court Publishing Company.

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No. 5

MAINE DE BIRAN'S PHILOSOPHY OF WILL

BY

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PREFACE.

No special account of Maine de Biran's philosophy has before appeared in English, and the sources are rendered somewhat difficult by the author's highly involved style. It has seemed, therefore, that a somewhat extended exposition of his work may prove useful. In the composition of this monograph my object has been two-fold: to give a statement of Biran's system, and to show his exact position in the history of speculative thought. As a result of careful investigation, I have found it necessary to call attention to the unitary character of the system, which, as a matter of fact, centers around the single idea — will. This conclusion is, of course, opposed to the view of Naville, who in his introduction to the *Œuvres inédites* divides Biran's work into three sharply distinguished periods. I am convinced, however, that this division rests on insufficient grounds. For in the idea of activity is to be found the keynote of the entire philosophy. This idea is clearly evident in the writings assigned by Naville to the earlier and the later periods, as well as in the more important works that were written during the intervening years.

On the whole, it may seem surprising that I have not emphasized more strongly the importance of Biran's philosophy. It is perhaps unusual in a work of this kind to minimize the significance of the subject. However that may be, I have to confess that the motive which led me to begin my study, the expectation of finding elements of permanent value in Biran's philosophy based on frequent references to him as 'the French Kant,' has scarcely been realized by my subsequent investigation. Even with the most sympathetic interpretation, Biran cannot be placed among philosophers of the first rank. Kant's great significance does not consist merely in his emphasis on the activity of mind against the empiricists, but rather in the fact that he shows that the activity in which the nature of mind is expressed is universal and objective in character. Biran, however, remains at the point of

view of empiricism ; for his epistemology is developed from the subjective psychological fact of will, and continues relative to the end. The universal and necessary character of causality is left unexplained. His psychology aims at being introspective and factual, but is lost in a bewildering mass of abstractions. I have shown that he stands for a position which is neither a third view correlative with empiricism and rationalism nor a synthesis of these two recognized systems, but rather an extension of the former — a development of the Locke-Condillac school, yet a development that is still on the same epistemological plane.

Finally it should be noted that my conclusions in regard to Biran's relation to subsequent philosophical positions refer exclusively to the logical connection of his ideas, and not to his indirect influence, which was certainly very great, but which I have made no attempt to estimate. With this reservation, my results indicate that his effect on later thought, *e. g.*, on that of Cousin or of Renouvier, was not extensive.

In working out this subject I have received most valuable advice and suggestions from Professor J. E. Creighton, under whom I had been studying during the time devoted to the composition of the monograph, and from Professor Ernest Albee, who very kindly read my manuscript at an early stage.

N. E. T.

BAINBRIDGE, N. Y.

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SECTION I.

Life and Works.

Maine de Biran was regarded by Cousin as "the first French metaphysician of our time."[1] Two reasons are sufficient to explain why this estimate was not made earlier or more generally accepted. Biran was not, like his great contemporary Kant, a teacher of philosophy. His career, as far as it was public, was almost entirely in the field of politics. To the men of his time he was better known as a statesman than as a philosopher. But the most important cause which contributed to his failure to gain early recognition was the fact that he published very little work. He was never quite satisfied with the form in which he had expressed his thought. The result was that his principal writings were left unfinished. Adequate material for estimating the value of his system was provided only by posthumous editions of his works.

The life of Biran was uneventful. He was born November 29, 1766, and died July 20, 1824. His father was a physician of the town of Bergerac, in the southwestern part of France. He was educated in the neighboring town of Perigueux, where he studied Condillac's philosophy under the direction of the *doctrinaires*. In 1785 he became a life-guardsman, but early in October of that year was wounded in the arm. He then went to Grateloup and remained there during the Reign of Terror. Subsequently he held several administrative offices in the province of Dordogne. But in 1809 he was chosen a member of the legislative assembly; and after 1812 he established his residence permanently at Paris. He was a member of the commission which took advantage of the reverse that Napoleon had sustained in Russia to demand guarantees of the peace of Europe and the liberties of the French citizens. After the Restoration, Biran was a member of the Chamber of Deputies until his death,

[1] Maine de Biran, *Œuvres Philosophiques*, Vol. I, p. xi.

except in the single session 1817. He voted at first with the liberals, but afterwards with their opponents. The change was due not to inconsistency, but to a desire to support the royal power which was in his opinion the only safeguard against anarchy or despotism.

Biran's first philosophical work was the *Influence de l'habitude*, which, in 1802, won for him the prize offered by the Institute of France. Three years later he received another prize from the same source, for his *Décomposition de la pensée*. In 1807 he received special mention by the Berlin Academy for his *Mémoire sur l'aperception interne immédiate*. Finally, in 1811, he received the prize from the academy of Copenhagen for his *Mémoire sur les rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme*. The first essay, together with an anonymous *Examen des leçons de philosophie de Laromiguière* in 1817, and *Une exposition de la doctrine de Leibnitz* in 1819,[1] were the principal works which he gave to the public during his life. But to appreciate the system as a whole, the *Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie* and the *Nouveaux essais d'anthropologie*, which were first edited by E. Naville in 1859, are indispensable. The first may be called Biran's masterpiece. This work, which was begun in 1811, was incomplete when Biran went to Paris and was developed at his leisure during several succeeding years. In the Introduction, the author says he intended to unite the three prize essays into a work more systematic and more carefully elaborated than the writings which he had presented to the various societies. He was led to adopt this plan from the fact that the three essays were the same in idea, differing only in the degree of development and in the form in which the idea was expressed.[2] The *Nouveaux essais d'anthropologie* (1823–24) is a fragment; but is very important, since it embodies the final expression of the author's philosophy of religion. This work reproduces many of the ideas in the *Psychologie*, and thus clearly shows the internal connection in all Biran's philosophy.

[1] In the *Biographie Universelle*, Vol. 23.

[2] *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, publiées par Naville, Vol. I, pp. 34–35.

SECTION II.

Objections to Naville's View of Biran's Development.

At the outset it should be said that under the title, "Philosophy of Will," I do not limit myself either to the period or to the characteristics of Maine de Biran's work, which that name might suggest to one who was familiar with Naville's exposition. In the *Nouveaux essais* there is a classification of the observed facts of human nature, which Naville takes as a key to three successive stages in the thought of the philosopher. Biran finds an animal life that is characterized by impressions, appetites, and movements, of physiological origin, and subject to the law of necessity; a human life resulting from the appearance of free will and self-consciousness; and a life of the spirit which begins when the soul frees itself from the rule of the lower tendencies and turns to God, there to find repose. On the analogy of this classification, which is taken to indicate Biran's development, Naville has described the system under three divisions: — a stage (1794–1804) in which Biran is influenced by the work of Condillac and agrees with Cabanis and de Tracy in regarding sense impressions as the origin of thought; a philosophy of will (1804–1818) when Biran develops with all its consequences the fact of the activity of mind; and finally (1818–1824) a philosophy of religion.[1] Favre agrees with Naville on this point. "Maine de Biran passed from the sensationalism of Condillac to a doctrine based on the self, and finally reached a third phase in which he gave the self a support: God."[2] Although Naville does not regard these divisions as absolute, since he recognizes that the first period contained in germ the principles which became explicit in the second period, and that early in the development of the philosophy of will there were tendencies apparent which indicated the mystical character of Biran's later thought; yet so much importance is attached to the distinctions that they determine the form of the exposition.

[1] *Op. cit.*, I, pp. v–viii.

[2] *Essai sur la métaphysique et la morale de Maine de Biran*, p. 6.

While admitting the practical convenience of this division, I think that it conveys an erroneous impression of the relations of the several parts of Biran's work. In the principal essay of the first period (1794–1804), the *Influence de l'habitude*, we already find the idea really fundamental to Biran's philosophy. The significance of the consciousness of effort and of will is here clearly stated. Only by a voluntary movement which meets a resistance, that is, by an effort which is a relation between a subject and a limit, do we gain a basis for consciousness of self and knowledge of the external world. A single passage will show how far Biran was removed from the philosophy of Condillac which Naville makes the dominant element in the first period.

"Effort necessarily carries with it the perception of a relation between the being which moves, or which wills to move, and some object which is opposed to the movement. Without a subject or a will that determines the movement, and without a term which resists, there is no effort. And without effort there is no knowledge or perception of any kind." [1]

In view of this and similar passages, we may regard the first period not so much as a distinct stage in the thought of the philosopher as an incomplete expression of the one idea of conscious activity which came to clear light in the second period. The doctrines which Naville takes as characteristic of the first stage were not the results of Biran's own thought, but rather the inheritance which he received from the school of Condillac. They were the subject matter, not the product, of his early philosophical activity.

Merten notes the fact that the notion of effort appears in the first pages of the essay on habit; but he says: "It is easy to see that it is only a question here of effort conceived as the correlative term of the impression." [2] But if "impression" is taken to mean an effect produced on the organism by something entirely external and foreign to the organism, we find that effort is not always correlated with impression even in the essay on habit. For example, Biran says: "We cannot doubt that the educa-

[1] *Œuvres philosophiques*, Vol. I, p. 27.
[2] *Étude critique sur Maine de Biran*, p. 9.

tion of what are usually considered merely as the sense organs begins only by the development of their individual or associated activity."[1] It will be noticed that Biran says 'education,' not 'existence': the organism is here regarded as susceptible to impression prior to any experience of effort. If, on the other hand, by impression is meant the consciousness that the will meets a resistance, effort is correlated with impression not only in Biran's earlier, but also in his later, work. Similarly, the distinction of the third from the second period is due to a change in the sphere of application, rather than in the essential character of the principle. In the philosophy of will the principle is applied to the individual. In the philosophy of religion as far as it is a self-consistent system, the principle of conscious activity is considered also in extra-individual relations. At the beginning, Biran was exclusively interested in a psychological account of mind, and only at a later date did he take up the questions concerning man's wider relations to society and the world.[2] Even at this later period these more fundamental problems never received adequate treatment. But this point will be worked out in more detail after we have given a general statement of his system.

Accordingly, in the treatment of Biran's philosophy of will, we shall not limit the consideration to the period indicated by Naville's division (1804–1818), but shall devote some attention to the earlier writings and also to the later development of the philosophy. It will, of course, remain true, however, that our study will have an especial reference to the second period, since it is here that Biran's ideas are most clearly stated, and that his views have most significance for the history of philosophy. This is the period of his most systematic and extended work, the *Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie.*

[1] *Œuvres philosophiques*, I, p. 99.

[2] Gabriel Tarde has recently pointed to this individualistic feature. Maine de Biran found that the "experiences of touch, sight, and hearing, in which it (the child) felt itself at once subject and object, stood out in high relief from the ordinary impressions of touch acting upon foreign substances, and from the usual impressions of sight and hearing. . . . But what Maine de Biran did not see is this: That stranger still and standing out yet more sharply on the background of our external perceptions, is our perceptions of other people." Interpsychology. *International Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 62.

SECTION III.

Biran's Relation to Earlier Thinkers: Locke, Condillac, Kant, and Reid.

Before considering Maine de Biran's philosophy in detail, it is well briefly to review the work of his direct predecessors in reference to the special points in which their opinions are related to the principle which he makes ultimate. This reference will show the nature of the philosophical thought which was dominant in France in his time, and also the specific manner in which he reacted against the current sensationalism; it will enable us to estimate his position at the beginning of his career, and also to determine the extent of his development. Comparison with the historical environment will lend distinctness to his leading ideas and will make it possible to determine more exactly the significance of their application in his system. With this end in view we shall attempt to trace the idea of the activity of the self as it is found in the work of Locke and of Condillac. But in this connection the treatment can be no more than a mere outline; and naturally cannot include even the mention of many important elements in the views of these philosophers.

At this point we may notice a definition of sensationalism.[1] Cousin, who found it congenial and advantageous[2] to call himself a disciple of Biran, brought the name into use. With him the term designated the least developed of the four common philosophical positions. The three types of thought correlative with it were idealism, skepticism, and mysticism.[3] He employed it to characterize the school of Condillac. But in a wider sense it has been applied to various thinkers, sometimes to denote a materialistic metaphysics, at other times an empirical epistemology, or finally a hedonistic ethics. Especially in the second of these senses the term was applied to the views of Condillac and in a

[1] Cf. Beaulavon's definition in *La grande encyclopédie*.

[2] Picavet, article *Biran* in *ibid.*

[3] Cf. Cousin's *History of Modern Philosophy* (translated by O. W. Wight), Vol. II, Lecture IV.

lesser degree to those of Locke. The epistemological aspect of these systems is important in relation to Biran.

Locke could accept without hesitation the empirical dictum, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit iu sensu.* But a careful consideration of his account of experience reveals the presence of self-activity in his theory of knowledge. All the materials of knowledge and reason come from experience. This experience, however, includes the observation not only of "external sensible objects" but of the "internal operations of our minds." [1] This "perception of the operations of our own mind within us," the second "fountain from which experience furnisheth the understanding with ideas," is named specifically Reflection, and "though it is not sense as having nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it (sense) and might properly enough be called *internal sense.*" [2] It is evident that, for Locke, the material derived from reflection has at least equal value with the products of sensation. The mind "observes its own actions . . . and takes from thence other ideas which are as capable to be the objects of its contemplation as any of those it received from foreign things." From reflection we derive the idea of perception and of will. "The power of thinking is called the understanding, and the power of volition is called the will." [3] Besides these simple ideas and their various modes there are other ideas that may be derived from reflection, *e. g.*, power. We observe "in ourselves that we can at pleasure move several parts of our bodies that were at rest." [4] Power is classified as active and passive. While ideas of both active and passive power are derived from our experience of the external world, "our senses do not afford us so clear and distinct an idea of active power, as we have from reflection on the operations of our minds." [5]

In comparing Locke with Biran, it is very important to notice his conception of will. In the chapter on power, he makes will and understanding examples of power. In regard to the first he

[1] *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, Ch. 1, § 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. 1, § 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. VI.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. VII, § 8.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. XXI, § 4.

says: "We find in ourselves a power to begin or to forbear, continue or end several actions of our minds and motions of our bodies, barely by a thought or preference of the mind ordering, or, as it were, commanding the doing or not doing such or such a particular action. This power which the mind has thus to order the consideration of any idea, or . . . the motion of any part of the body . . . in any particular instance is what we call will." [1] These powers of mind, which are sometimes called faculties, should not be supposed "to stand for some real beings in the soul that performed those actions." [2] The nature of the will is also evident from the treatment of the question of freedom. The agent is at liberty to follow the preference of his mind; but to ask if the will has freedom is to ask if one power has another power." [3] Volition "is an act of the mind directing its thought to the production of any action, and thereby exerting its power to produce it," [4] while "freedom consists in the dependence of the existence . . . of any action upon our volition of it." [5]

The secondary place which the will holds in Locke's scheme is further shown by a consideration of his view of spirit. Finite spirit is one of the three varieties of substance, yet in the mental operations of thinking, reasoning, fearing, *etc.*, which we refer to a spiritual substrate "we have as clear a notion of the substance of spirit as we have of body." [6] In the section on the intuitive knowledge of our own existence, Locke is so far from making will the core of being that he does not even mention it as one of the forms of consciousness in which we find direct and indisputable evidence of existence, although he would no doubt be willing to include it as coördinate with the "I think, I reason, I feel pleasure and pain" and "I doubt." [7] Finally, it is not the will that makes the self as in Biran. "Nothing but consciousness can unite remote existences into the same person: the identity of sub-

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, Ch. XXI, § 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. XXI, § 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. XXI, § 16.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. XXI, § 28.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. XXI, § 27.
[6] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. XXIII, § 5.
[7] *Ibid.*, IV, Ch. IX, § 3.

stance will not do it; for whatever substance there is, however framed, without consciousness there is no person." [1]

In the system of Condillac, there is presented a form of empiricism which differs in many respects from that of Locke and which is especially important in the present connection. The *Traité des sensations* appeared in 1754. It is the aim of the author to show that all knowledge is derived from sensation. By means of sensations the soul is modified and all its knowledge and faculities are developed. The problem here is not so much the nature of the mind as the character and origin of mental operations. With reference to the philosophy of Locke, Condillac makes the following criticism: "The greater part of the judgments which are united to all sensation escaped him [Locke]. He did not realize that we must learn to touch, to see, and to hear, *etc.* All the faculties of the soul appeared to him as innate qualities." [2] Reflection is not a source of ideas coördinate with sensation. Locke did not carry his analysis far enough. "The sensations after having been attention, comparison, judgment, finally become reflection." [3] It is not our purpose to trace the system of transformed sensations as they are variously related to the original sensation, which Condillac builds up in describing the developing consciousness of his statue. But with reference to Biran it is necessary to consider, at least very briefly, the place of desire and will in the view of the author of the *Traité des sensations.*

The sensations from the first have an affective quality. While the statue is for itself nothing more than the single sensation to which it attends, that sensation is agreeable or disagreeable. Experience is pleasant or unpleasant even before there is any comparison of experiences. Pain cannot make the statue desire a state that it does not know. The first sensation, however agreeable or disagreeable it is, cannot lead to desire.[4] Only when the statue notices that it can cease to be what it is and become what it has been, will desire arise from a painful state.[5] Desire is the

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, Ch. XXVII, § 23.
[2] *Traité des sensations. Extrait raisonné*, pp. 6 and 7 (Houel ed.).
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[4] *Cf. ibid.*, I, Ch. II, § 3.
[5] *Cf. ibid.*, I, Ch. II, § 4.

activity of the faculties of the soul when they are directed upon a thing of which we feel the need. It presupposes the idea of something better than what is at present existent, and also a judgment of the difference of two successive states.[1]

With Biran will is absolutely distinct from desire, with Condillac it is a further development of desire. The memory of having satisfied some desires gives the hope of being able to satisfy others. Although the outcome is not certain, confidence increases in proportion as the need is felt to be great. The statue then does not limit itself to desiring; but it wills. Will is "an absolute desire, that is, a desire of such a nature that we think the thing desired is in our power."[2]

Personality is not constituted by the activity of the will as in Biran, but is dependent upon memory. With the first sensation there is no personality; but with a change of sensation the self "judges that it is the same which has existed before, in another manner, and it says 'I.'"[3] This consciousness of self is so far from being dependent on will that it is even antecedent to desire. "Before being able to say 'I desire' one must be able to say 'I.'"[2] The sense of touch is a unique form of sensation. It is the first in importance in the animal life. Condillac names touch the fundamental feeling. He even identifies it with personality. This feeling and the *ego* of the statue are "only one thing in origin."[4] It is by this sense that the statue discovers its body and learns that there is an external world. This result is effected by movement; but contrary to Biran's theory, the movement by which we discover the *non-ego* is involuntary. It is determined by the pleasant or unpleasant character of sensation; but the organism reacts without any plan. Prevision is unnecessary, obedience to nature alone is sufficient. In consequence of the organization of the statue, its muscles move its limbs on the occurrence of an unpleasant stimulus "and it moves without a plan as even without knowing that it moves."[5]

[1] *Cf. Op. cit.*, I, Ch. III, §§ 1 and 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, Ch. III, §9.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, Ch. VI, §2.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. I, §3.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. IV, §2.

With the discovery of something beyond the self, which is brought about through the sense of touch, the statue finds that the essential character of each sensation is that it leads to some knowledge. This reference beyond itself transforms the sensation into an idea. "Every impression which conveys knowledge is an idea."[1] Knowledge is thus independent of volition. It is the final result of the transformation of the sensation. In the beginning the sensation had an affective attribute, but not volitional character; and this last step in the development which changes sensation to idea is effected by the influence of an external stimulus upon a purely passive organism.

Although we cannot doubt the existence of body to which we must refer sensible qualities, yet we are quite cut off from the hope of any real knowledge of the object. For "considering the origin of ideas it is clear that they present to our statue nothing but qualities variously combined. The statue perceives, for example, solidity, extension, divisibility, figure, and motion united in all that it touches; and it has consequently the idea of body. But to the question, What is a body? it can only answer, it is there, that is to say, you will always find there, solidity, extension, divisibility, and figure."[2] The words being and substance are devoid of positive significance. Our knowledge is sufficient for our needs. An intuitive knowledge of the reality of the self, which Locke finds by reflecting on the operations of the mind, and which Biran finds in the consciousness of effort, is unnecessary in the system of Condillac.

The important characteristic of the system, for us, is the fact that in this account of origins, Condillac does not make the will fundamental. The will together with memory, comparison, reflection, *etc.*, is derived from an original, affectively qualified sensation. Knowledge of the not-self does not depend upon will, but the reverse is rather true, since will is a form of desire, and desire implies knowledge of the not-self. This difference in the treatment of will is the essential distinction between Condillac and Biran. We shall see later that there is a striking similarity

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, Ch. VIII, §28.
[2] *Ibid.*, IV, Ch. VI, §9.

between their forms of exposition and also in their explanations of important points.

From Condillac we proceed to consider briefly the form of contemporary empiricism, with which our philosopher was most closely connected. Maine de Biran's first important work was a study of the influence of habit on the various modes of conscious activity. Destutt de Tracy was chairman of the committee which awarded the prize to this essay. He was also the leading representative of the idealogists. In 1796 he had invented this name to mark out what he and his friends believed to be the proper line of philosophical activity. Metaphysics was discredited, in their opinion, because it applied to researches on the nature of being and in regard to the origin and first cause of things, which they held to be useless. Psychology meant the science of the soul and also referred to first causes. Idealogy, on the contrary, treated questions of origin as unanswerable. Whether we study within or without ourselves all we can hope to accomplish is to acquire a deeper knowledge of the laws of nature. Idealogy adopted purely scientific methods of research. It aimed to be the basis of grammar, logic, ethics, pedagogy, and social science. By exclusive attention to the empirical study of mind, de Tracy hoped to develop a system which should be more firmly established and more fruitful in results than the pre-revolutionary philosophy had been. Next to Destutt de Tracy the most important of the idealogists was an intimate friend of Biran, named Cabanis, who was especially distinguished for his physiological researches.

In the essay on habit, Maine de Biran begins with this essentially epistemological view. How closely he is allied to the idealogists in method and purpose, can be seen from his own statement of his position in the introduction. "In all that is to follow, I have no other intention than to investigate and analyze effects as we can know them, either by reflecting on what we experience in the exercise of our senses and different faculties, or by studying the conditions or the play of the organs on which this exercise depends. I have tried to unite, in certain respects at least, idealogy and physiology."[1] Again he says: "We know

[1] *Œuvres philosophiques*, Vol. I, p. 16.

nothing of the nature of forces. They are manifest to us only by their effects. The human mind observes these effects, traces their analogies, and calculates their relations when they are susceptible of measure; this is the limit of its power." [1]

In order to determine the influence of habit, Maine de Biran finds it necessary to state his general view of the faculties and operations of the understanding. This is fortunate, as it gives data by which we can make out the relation of his early position to that of Locke and of Condillac. With the earlier philosophers Biran believes that the intellectual faculties derive everything from sensation, or by receiving impressions.[2] "The faculty of receiving impressions is the first and most general of all that occur in the living organism." [3] The impression is the result of the action of an object on an animate being. The object, whether internal or external, is the cause of the impression. Impression has the same value as sensation in the ordinary acceptation of that term. The impression varies for consciousness according to which of the particular sense organs mediates the modification. And in this respect the organism is a constituent factor in all sensations.

There are, however, certain further operations of thought which cannot be explained by a comparison of the products of the various sense organs. This fact leads Biran to postulate a further principle of classification, according to which impressions are either active or passive. When we perceive a modification of any particular kind in consciousness and have no power over the modification, the impression is passive. Even in this case the experience is not a mechanical result of the stimulus. The sense organ by its specific activity determines the character of the sensation. The activity occurs within the self, but without the direction of the self. In the case of voluntary movement, we have a totally different kind of experience. In moving the arm, for example, after we abstract from every impression of the sort above described which results from the movement, we have left an impression of an entirely different nature. Here the self cre-

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 17.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 15 and 16.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 18.

ates its own modification. It can begin, leave off, or vary the modification. And consciousness apart from the passive impressions gives an evidence of the modifications.

The nature of the organism is such that there is an intimate connection between the faculty of mere sensation and the faculty of movement. They are constituent factors in almost all experience. With few exceptions the impressions have a mixed character; they are made up of sensitive and motor activity, and are active in one relation and passive in another. The ratio of the movement and the feeling varies. When the feeling is very prominent the individual is not conscious of the accompanying movement and the impression is passive. To this form Biran applies the name sensation. If the motor element is prominent, or even if it stands in such a degree of equilibrium that it cannot be eclipsed, the individual is active and can compare himself with others. To impressions which have these characteristics Biran gives the name perceptions. In each of the sense organs there is a particular relation of the two factors. Classified in a graded order according to the decreasing prominence of the motor factor, we have the sense of touch, vision, auditory sensation correlated with the vocal faculty, the sense of taste, and the sense of smell, and finally the impressions received from the internal parts of the body which can be called pure sensations.[1]

To summarise the positions of Locke, Condillac, and Biran, we may say that each makes knowledge dependent upon experience. But Locke begins with a mind which derives its experience from the two-fold source, sensation and reflection. And under reflection are found perception and will as modes of activity. Moreover, consciousness is a *conditio sine qua non* of perception and will. Condillac builds up perception, will, and consciousness in general from the action of a stimulus on a purely passive mind. Will is dependent upon desire, and desire in turn is dependent upon the affective attribute of sensation. Perception of the *non-ego* is gained through a unique quality or the sense of touch. Biran discovers in the original impressions or materials of experience an active and a passive factor. It is the active, that is, the volitional element

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 21–25.

which distinguishes perception from mere sensation and which is thus the basis of consciousness.

The development of this idea of an active empirical factor is the characteristic phase of his system. He identifies the self with the feeling of effort. It is by making this perceived self a fact rather than an idea that he distinguishes his system from all forms of rationalism, which he regards as based on abstract ideas. By emphasis on the "inner" and consequently necessary character of this fact he differentiates his position from that of empiricism. The categories of thought are derived from the nature of the primitive fact, and his psychology is an account of the relation in which the self discovered in effort stands to the physiological system with which it is connected.

In this connection we may note the relation in which Biran stood to Kant. The direct debt of the French to the German philosopher was very slight.[1] The inaugural dissertation of 1770 was the only one of Kant's works which Biran studied in the original.[2] Biran's own estimate of the relation is valuable, especially since he did not, as was the case in reference to the system of Condillac, over-emphasize the disparity between his own position and that which he criticizes. He says: "Kant occupies himself with the classification or with the logical order of the means (*instruments*) of knowledge, rather than with the real analysis of the elements of that knowledge itself." The unitary subject and the multiple object "are, in his view, absolutely undivided and indivisible in inner and outer experience; for the object can be conceived only under the forms of space and time which are inherent in the subject . . . , and the subject . . . cannot be known, originally, by itself, without the representation of some object." Again, he says: "The subject and object are," for Kant, "only two abstractions, no real or positive knowledge belongs to either the one or the other," yet "all reality consists only in the union of these two abstracts elements."[3] The critical philosophy by

[1] The principal sources of Biran's knowledge of Kant were, probably, Gerando's *Histoire comparée des systèmes* (1804) first edition, and the second volume of Ancillon's *Mélanges*. *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, p. 166.

[2] Kühtmann, *Maine de Biran*, p. 58.

[3] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, pp. 167–8.

investing every sensation with space and time which are the inherent forms of sensibility, "makes no distinction between the different kinds of sensations, inner and outer, or the two sorts of elements in a single complete sensation," [1] the representative and the unrepresentative elements which occur now singly and now together. It is clear that for Biran the subject-object relation is psychological while for Kant it is epistemological.

We may easily work out objections to Biran's philosophy from the Kantian point of view. The self as a fact of immediate perception admittedly contains an empirical factor. Therefore any deductive account of the principle of knowledge based upon this self must be devoid of the character of absolute necessity. "If our knowledge of thinking beings in general, so far as it is derived from pure reason, were founded on more than the *cogito*, and if we made use at the same time of observations on the play of our thoughts and the natural laws of the thinking self, derived from them, we should have before us an empirical psychology, which would form a kind of physiology of the internal sense, and perhaps explain its manifestations, but would never help us to understand such properties as do not fall under any possible experience (as, for instance, simplicity), or to teach apodictically anything touching the nature of thinking beings in general." [2] If, however, we pass over this objection and provisionally admit the validity of deductions from the psychological self, we find the same difficulty in Biran's system which Kant finds in rational psychology in general, that is, "reason imposes upon us an apparent knowledge only, by representing the constant logical subject of thought as the knowledge of the real subject in which that knowledge inheres. Of that subject, however, we have not and cannot have the slightest knowledge, because consciousness is that which alone changes representation into thoughts. and in which, therefore, as the transcendental subject, all our perceptions must be found. Besides this logical meaning of the I, we have no knowledge of the subject in itself, which forms the substratum and foundation of it and of all our thoughts." [3]

[1] *Œuvres philosophiques*, Vol. III, p. 240.
[2] *Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. by Max Müller), p. 283.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 285–286.

Biran has been compared to Kant with reference to the concept of self-activity. Let us see now just how much and how little real resemblance there is.

König called Biran the French Kant. But the comparison is employed with reference to the emphasis that each of the philosophers gives to the "spontaneity of the subject." Moreover König points out the different applications of the concept in the two cases. "The same idea of spontaneity by means of which Kant reformed empirical epistemology is applied by Biran to the psychology of sensationalism. That which was an epistemological hypothesis in the first instance appears as a psychological fact in the second. The counterpart of the transcendental function of the understanding meets us as the empirical activity of the psychological subject."[1] König regards Biran's psychological deduction of the categories as entirely unsatisfactory. "Although Biran's attempt to deduce the pure concepts of the understanding from inner perception is to be regarded as unsuccessful and his identification of the logical subject with the subject as object of inner perception is an error which manifests itself by its consequences, yet his work is of great interest, *etc.*"[2] Again, epistemology "has emancipated itself more and more from psychology."[3] Lévy-Bruhl finds great resemblance between Biran and Kant apparently because neither the one nor the other believed that "by means of analysis based on purely internal experience, we can . . . arrive at the notion of a substantial ego."[4] But we find that in Kant soul-substance is opposed to a transcendental unity while in Biran it is opposed to a real force.

With Kant the principle of activity is involved throughout the whole of consciousness. With Biran it is a particular element in consciousness. Will is a part of mind over against other parts, passive elements, as pure sensations, desires, pleasure, pain, *etc.* Consciousness is a sum of mental elements, which respectively derive their significance and value from the relation in which they stand to the active element, will, rather than a

[1] *Philosophische Monatshefte*, Vol. XXV, pp. 160 ff.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 169.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 190–191.
[4] *History of Modern Philosophy in France* (Eng. trans.), p. 327.

unity which is organically related to its parts. The result is that, for Biran, the self is one element, or part, abstracted from consciousness, rather than the total subjective side of a unitary experience. Consequently, the self is a special fact to be verified by introspection in the same manner as any other part within consciousness. It differs from the other simple elements by reason of its active character, and its universal occurrence throughout the conscious life; but not by including the other elements within itself. The difference between Kant and Biran will become very clear as we trace the relation of the self taken as a particular element to the ideas of substance, identity, and causality. And it will also receive illustration when later in the psychology we trace it as one constituent factor in the mental life.

Naville places Biran, as an opponent of skepticism, with Kant and Reid. "The formal denial of the principle of causality in the writings of the skeptical Scotsman (Hume) gave him (Biran) the full consciousness of the value of his own thought. When we consider the importance which he attached to the principle, and the attention he gave to the arguments of the skeptic even in their minutest detail, we feel authorized to say that he is on the same ground with Kant and Reid. . . . He accomplished the same work of struggle and restoration as Kant and Reid, but he accomplished it in other ways."[1] Naville compares Biran's psychology with the "phenomenalism" of the Scottish school, as represented by Dugald Stewart.

For the present consideration, however, it is more important to compare Biran's principles with those of Reid, as the real head of the Scottish school. Seth has shown very clearly Reid's method of attacking the "Idealistic school" (Descartes, Locke, and Hume). Reid struck directly at the root-assumption, "namely that experience yields as its ultimate data such self-subsistent, 'loose,' or relationless units of sensation as Hume begins and ends with."[2] "We do not start, he insists, with ideas, but with judgments. So far from being the primitive act of

[1] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, pp. cix, cx.
[2] A. Seth, *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 73.

mind, Simple Apprehension or the knowledge of sensations *per se*, is a species of abstract contemplation." [1] "Our first having of a sensation is at the same time the knowledge of a present object, and (implicitly) of that object as somehow related to me." [1] Biran, on the other hand, develops farther rather than opposes the ideas of the English school. He reduces the theory of simple apprehension to more ultimate terms but does not substitute for that theory the view that "judgment is the primitive act of mind." The impression is something requiring analysis; but it is explained by a fact of immediate experience. The immediate knowledge of the self is a particular kind of simple apprehension rather than a judgment.

Another point of difference between Reid and Biran is in the character of the ontology which is required by their respective theories of knowledge. Seth says "it might be argued that by maintaining a theory of immediate perception, Scottish philosophy destroys the foreignness of matter to mind, and thus implicitly removes the only foundation of a real dualism." [2] Biran very explicitly teaches dualism. The resistance which meets the will in effort is foreign to the self. Our knowledge of reality may become more determinate; but that reality itself always remains an independent "other" over against the self.

The fundamental differences between Reid and Biran become still clearer when we consider their treatment of particular topics. As will is the central idea in Biran's system, and as it is in the act of will that we discover the self, it is advisable to consider what will is for Reid. His definition is as follows: "Every man is conscious of a power to determine in things which he conceives to depend upon his determination. To this power we give the name of will." There are some characteristics of will which we must notice. First, "every act of will must have an object": a man cannot "will without willing something." Second, "the immediate object of will must be some action of our own." Third, "the object of our volition must be something which we believe to be in our power and to depend upon our will." Fourth,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 78.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.

"volition is accompanied with an effort to execute that which we willed." Finally, "in all determinations of the mind that are of any importance, there must be something in the preceding state of the mind that disposes or inclines us to that determination." [1]

In Reid's first observation concerning the will, that is, in the statement that the will must have an object, we meet with a divergence from Biran's view. For from the latter standpoint, the will, it is true, meets a resistance, but not with an object in the strict sense of the term. There comes to be an object only after the will has been in activity and the resistance has been abstracted from the complete act of will. In fact, the resistance does not become an explicit object until the distinction between inner and outer experience has been developed. Passing to the fourth characteristic of the will, that is, that it must be accompanied by effort, we find another distinction between the views of Reid and of Biran. With the latter, effort is not a second act supplementary to the act of will, but it is our consciousness of the act of will, the will meets with resistance. Reid thinks of the matter in psychical terms, while Biran makes the act depend on the presence of the muscular system. Finally, in Reid's view, there must be a motive to will, but for Biran the will is the basis of all cognitive experience, and consequently of all explicit motives. These points make clear the radical difference in the ideas of will that are found in the two systems, and we now pass on to differences on other important questions.

Reid makes "judgment and belief in some cases precede simple apprehension." "Instead of saying that the belief or knowledge is got by putting together and comparing the simple apprehensions, we ought rather to say that simple apprehension is performed by resolving and analysing a natural and original judgment." "The belief which accompanies sensation and memory is a simple act of the mind which cannot be defined." [2] Moreover this belief applies to the subject as well as to the object. "Thought must have a subject and be the act of some thinking being." The existence of the subject and object are not derived from sensations. "They are judgments of nature . . . judgments not got

[1] *Collected Writings* (8th ed.), pp. 530–533
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 106–108.

by comparing ideas, . . . but immediately inspired by our constitution." [1] With Biran the idea of the subject is derived from an analysis of inner sensation; the idea of the object is developed from the resistance which meets conscious effort.

With Reid notions or conceptions are distinguished very sharply from sensations. They are the "result of our constitution," the power by which they are acquired "is neither sensation nor reflection." Extension, figure, and motion "are not ideas of sensation, nor like to any sensation." [2] With Biran, sensation and perception differ simply in respect to the degree of volitional activity involved. In sensation there is merely enough activity present to maintain consciousness, but in perception the self is in some degree attentive.

Reid answered Hume by attacking the principle that ideas, or impressions, are the only reality. The self and the object are real and are known by natural judgments. Biran answered Hume by finding an idea, or impression, which had been overlooked in the analysis, that is, the feeling of self discovered in the consciousness of effort.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 110.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

SECTION IV.

Psychological Basis of Biran's Philosophy.

In giving a general account of Maine de Biran's philosophy in its completed form I shall follow the divisions of the subject which he made in the *Essai sur les fondements de la psychologie*. We shall look first at the primitive fact of consciousness, then at the deduction of the categories, and finally at the psychology. First, there is a description of the primitive fact of voluntary activity in which the author maintains that we have a direct perception of the self. This fact is for him the real basis of consciousness. Secondly, the primitive fact of consciousness gives what he regards as a real basis for the ideas of substance, causality, and unity. We have then in this connection his metaphysics in so far as he has given one. Finally, in the third part of the work there is the psychology proper, in which the principle of voluntary activity is traced through the various degrees of relation that it sustains to an underlying basis of unconscious and purely affective life.

Maine de Biran's philosophy is founded upon psychology, in the sense that he aims to derive rather than postulate epistemological principles. The beginning is a fact, but it is not a fact in the common signification of the term, in the sense of a relation independent of the subject; it is a fact of inner experience (*sens intime*), the primary activity of consciousness. The philosopher is very careful to define this ultimate factor of experience and knowledge. He distinguishes it from simple sensation by elaborating the difficulties involved in the contingent and unrelated character of external impressions; and he differentiates it from perception in general by emphasizing the relative character of objective knowledge. We do not apply the name fact to all that exists for us, all that we perceive without or sense within ourselves, or all that we can conceive. We have a fact only when we are aware of our own individual existence and of the existence of

something else, an object or modification, that accompanies our own existence and yet is distinct from it. "A fact is nothing unless it is known, unless there is an individual and permanent subject which knows." [1]

This definition excludes mere sensation from the category of fact. And, in consequence, we cannot place the origin of knowledge in sensation. So long as the subject is identified with its modification, so long as it has no individual existence, or self, and is not distinguished from the object that is known, we do not have knowledge. On this distinction rests the fact of knowledge which we can justly call primitive, for nothing can be conceived without it and all other knowledge presupposes it as a necessary condition.[2] To be self or in self is essential if one is to perceive the simplest fact or know in the slightest degree. There is also a negative proof of this position. Experience shows that the more vividly we are affected, the less our impressions or the objects which excite them are facts for us. Consequently, we can conclude that there would be no knowledge of any kind for a purely sensitive being. The primitive fact is not the simple sensation, but the idea of the sensation which is possible only with the individuality of the self.[3]

The conception of the basis of consciousness as a relation between the self and the not-self seems at first to exclude the distinction of facts of inner experience from sensations and representation in general. The self and the object are known only in immediate relation to each other. How is the self or the single subject to know itself as independent of all sensible modifications. According to Biran the confusion results from neglecting to determine the primary condition which makes external objects possible. If the self is identified with its affective sensations and exists only in and through them, it does not exist for itself. There is no relation, no fact, and no knowledge. But if the self is distinguished from, as well as united to, each of its sensations, so that there are internal facts of consciousness and specific sensations, the latter

[1] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, p. 36.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 37–38.
[3] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 38–39.

are purely passive in principle and cannot serve as the basis of knowledge; they are merely hypothetical elements.[1]

Sensations are constantly varying both on account of external causes and on account of the condition of the sense organs. Sometimes they disappear from consciousness, at other times they obscure it by their intensity. They have not the permanence which we expect in the source of knowledge. In themselves they do not have the nature of relations. If they gain this character through the judgment of externality they are facts but are no longer ultimate. The primitive relation cannot be determined so long as one of the elements is a vague notion of a sense object. No one of the external senses can supply the kind of term required in that constant union which is the fundamental relation of consciousness. We are compelled to look beyond sensation for the necessary element in the original duality, or the primitive fact of inner experience. For the requirement of constant and reciprocal relation of the two terms is not satisfied either by affective or by representative sensation. Even when sensation is regarded as a primitive duality, the subject as simple and permanent is distinguished from an object or mode, which is variable; but this is to describe elements which are abstracted from the relation which alone causes them.[2]

After this negative argument to show that sensation cannot be the ultimate datum which we require, Maine de Biran proceeds to determine positively the nature of the primitive fact. If the subject is one and simple, and a real existence rather than a pure abstraction, we can say further that the self, like any other existence, is a fact only as a variable or permanent mode of a substance, or as an effect of a cause which determines it. We have to ask if the self is given to itself in the primitive fact as a modified subject, or as a cause, or force which is productive of certain effects. This question has been neglected, or rather it has been assumed that the soul is a substance, and thus no place has been left for the principle of activity. It is true that we have in our minds the idea of substance; but it is not difficult to prove that

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 40–43.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 45.

the notion depends upon a deduction from primitive facts. We find also in ourselves the notion of cause or force, but prior to the notion is the immediate experience of force. This experience is no other than that of our very existence, which is inseparable from activity. We could not know ourselves as individual persons, if we did not feel ourselves as the cause of movements produced in the organic body. The cause or force actually applied in the movement of the body is active and is called will. The self identifies itself completely with this active force. But only through its exercise is the force a fact for the self; and this activity occurs only in relation to an inert or resisting limit. The force is actualized only in relation to its goal; and the goal is determinate only in relation to the force which tends to move it. The fact of this tendency is effort, or volition, which is the primitive fact of inner experience.[1]

Effort is a fact, since it consists in a relation between a force and the limit of the force. The fact is primitive, since it is the first in the order of knowledge. The first sensations which give the first perceptions are themselves aroused by the same individual force that creates effort. This primitive effort is a fact of inner experience, because it does not go beyond its immediate application, the inertia of the physical organs. It is the simplest of all relations, since all our perceptions depend on it as their essential condition and formal element; and the judgment of externality rests on and is an extension of it. Finally, it is the single relation which is invariable; the constant result of an identical force acting on an identical goal.[2] In the *Anthropologie*, Maine de Biran gives a somewhat closer determination of the nature of the effort which is a fundamental fact in his system; the active element does not depend upon the passive element in human nature. "Life and the material organism, which is an actual and perhaps a necessary condition of certain forms of thought, does not originate the thought."[3] To bring this out clearly, movement is classified as instinctive, spontaneous, or voluntary. Spontaneous movement is that which is "produced by the direct action of the brain,"

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 47.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 48.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 376.

while instinctive movement is "produced by a reaction of the same center following sensible impressions of the inner organs." The important question for Maine de Biran is the relation of the several classes of movements. "The development of animal life must necessarily lead to the transformation of the first insensible, instinctive movement . . . into spontaneous movements which can be sensed in the animal and distinctly perceived when they exist in man. We ask now if the spontaneous movements can be transformed immediately into voluntary movements." [1] Physiology shows that the cerebral center functions in automatic as in voluntary movements. But "something more enters into the activity of the will in bodily movements than enters into the functions of the nervous and cerebral organism, and that something more, under whatever title it is expressed, must be considered as . . . a hyper-organic force," [2] which stands to the nervous system as the latter stands to the muscular system. This is a characteristic of man as distinguished from the lower animals. Spontaneous movements which form the transition from instinct to will are "the limit of development of the purely animal life," but "the beginning of the active life." We catch a glimpse of the passage from spontaneous to volitional movements in waking. Then "the self reënters its domain and seizes the products of a force which is not its own." [3]

In a letter to Ampère, Biran says that "the sense of effort is the same as the *active* muscular sense." [4] He does not admit effort in the "mere action of the hyper-organic force on the brain, but in that action transmitted to the muscular organism." [4]

The cause of the effort becomes self through the distinction which arises between the subject of the free effort and the limit which immediately resists the effort. In this sense, the consciousness of effort is the self and is known in its activity. It cannot be known without this activity any more than we could really know what colors are without visual sensations. But in either case we can study the physical or organic means by which the

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 458-59.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 465.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 470.
[4] A. Bertrand in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, Vol. I, pp. 318–19.

experience comes about. This is especially necessary when dealing with inner experience, in order clearly to distinguish the perception of the subject from the perception of objects. The consciousness of effort is restricted to that part of the muscular system which the will can call directly into play. Voluntary effort differs essentially from the muscular sensation, or sensation of movement which we have when any part of the muscular system is moved by an external force. There is no excitation, or stimulus; but the movement is produced without any force other than that which perceives itself immediately in its exercise. When we symbolize the activity by physiological signs, we can say the volitional force passes from the center of the nervous system to the voluntary muscles, while the simple muscular sensation arises at the periphery and terminates at the nervous center. In the analysis we are compelled to resort to these physiological terms, but in the fact of inner experience we find that voluntary activity is really indivisible and instantaneous.[1]

There are two moments of volitional activity. The first corresponds to the simple motor determination of the nervous system and does not seem to involve any inner perception; but even if it did, it would not be the symbol of individuality. The self does not know itself until it distinguishes itself, as subject of effort, from a resisting limit. Prior to this the inner perception can be no more than a vague consciousness of existence. The second moment corresponds to the muscular contraction and the report to the nervous center. This completes the inner perception of effort, which is inseparable from a resisting limit.[2]

As already indicated, we have in this statement of Maine de Biran's fundamental position the important characteristics by which he distinguishes his philosophy from other forms of empiricism and from rationalism. The sensation apart from the subject of consciousness is really nothing for that consciousness. The attempt to substantialize pure sensation, by neglecting its relation to the subject, and then to develop it into knowledge by means of a purely logical process was, according to Biran, the

[1] *Cf. Œuvres inèdites*, Vol. I, pp. 208–12.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 212–213.

error of later empiricism, especially in the case of Condillac. This unfortunate result was due to the defective psychological analysis which neglected elements because they were not readily associated with particular objects in the external world. On the other hand, the error of rationalism was the fact that it substantialized the soul itself. A system was built on the idea of consciousness made absolute. With Descartes the beginning was mind substance and its correlate material substance instead of the actual effort and resistance of psychological analysis. Leibnitz came nearer to an adequate statement by his emphasis of independent activity as the essential characteristic of substance; yet he also made the force absolute, contrary to the evidence of introspection. In the primitive fact of our volitional activity Maine de Biran believes that he finds a datum that is at once dependent upon experience and yet can serve as a real basis for the explanation of consciousness. Experience, according to him, when accurately analyzed, yields a fact which has all the advantages of an *a priori* principle. The unitary and unchangeable character of effort is due to the circumstance that the two terms of the relation, the self, and the resistance remain constant. The resistance is primarily our own body. The general criticism of the empiricists and the rationalists is that the former did not carry their analysis far enough, while the latter carried it too far, and that each school substituted abstractions for facts.

But Maine de Biran himself does not avoid the fault of abstraction which he attributed to his predecessors. If we consider actual experience, we do not find his primitive fact in the isolated form in which he describes it. The distinction and the correlation of objective and subjective factors extend through all experience. Effort is not a conscious fact, unless it is judged. Consequently the effort which Biran makes a fundamental principle is not the result of a simple analysis of experience, but is derived only by abstraction from ideational factors which are always associated with it. Perception of the self is not given simply in experience. The difficulties of his position become apparent when we notice the implications involved in each of the two senses in which effort may be employed as an explanatory prin-

ciple of conscious activity. If, (1) while admitting that in simple analysis the external reference is as ultimate as volitional activity for consciousness, it is still maintained that from the point of view of origin the volitional factor is more ultimate; in other words, if we make the problem one of genesis, the effort is then no longer a primitive fact but a conceptual construction which we are using as a ground for the explanation of consciousness very much in the same manner in which Condillac used sensation, or Descartes used soul substance. More technically stated, Maine de Biran makes the feeling of effort, which he regards as the primitive fact of consciousness, serve also as the logical ground of consciousness. There is a confusion of method, a failure to distinguish the facts of introspective analysis from those of genetic description. He would doubtless himself say that there is no confusion, that his greatest merit was the discovery of a fact which was at the same time a principle of explanation. But in considering that discovery we should note that for him there is no fact apart from consciousness: the first fact is a relation. The primitive feeling of effort is the genetic source of the idea of an external world; but that fact itself involves the idea of another, a resistance. We cannot have an idea, a consciousness of another, or a resistance, apart from the idea of something, perhaps indefinite, which is in some sense external to the self. That is, the thought of consciousness involves the thought of a reference beyond the self. But if (2), the effort in question is taken to be logically but not temporally prior to consciousness, it is no longer the primitive fact of consciousness, in the strict sense. A logical distinction between inner and outer experience seems to be given a psychological significance, and in virtue of this distinction a psychological abstraction is made the ultimate principle of consciousness. These difficulties are raised with no desire to depreciate the value of Biran's emphasis of conscious activity, but merely to question the adequacy of his psychological basis of epistemology. The deficiencies of the method will be more apparent when we have seen its application in Biran's detailed accounts of the principles of consciousness and of the phenomena of mental life. We shall now consider his deduction of the principles of substance, causality, unity, *et cetera.*

SECTION V.

Deduction of the Categories.

Passing to the deduction of the categories, we see that effort as it is found in the inner conscious experience, is the basis, according to Maine de Biran, of our ultimate metaphysical ideas. To the exercise of the faculty of inner perception, we owe not only the consciousness of the self but also the primary ideas of being, cause, substance, and unity. These ideas differ from the abstract class notions with which they are often confused. They are natural and necessary rather than artificial and arbitrary. They are the conditions of thought and belong to the beginning of knowledge instead of being mere means or symbols. And finally they are independent of the natural impressions with which they are associated. They cannot, however, belong exclusively to the very nature of an unconditioned and independent soul; but must, on the other hand, have their origin in experience. We must not presuppose anything innate; analysis should be carried as far as possible. With the results already attained in regard to the origin of personality, Biran thinks he can explain the ideas in question without referring them to sensation or to the nature of the soul. Prior to the self there is no actual or possible knowledge. Since it is only necessary to introspect in order to have the idea of being, of substance, of cause, and of unity; we may say that each of the ideas has its immediate origin in the consciousness of the self. They can always be reduced from the form in which they appear to the immediate and permanent type which they have in inner experience.[1]

The idea of force can be originally derived only from the consciousness of the subject who experiences effort. Even when the idea is already abstracted from the fact of consciousness, it still bears the imprint of its origin. We cannot conceive any force of attraction or repulsion in bodies without attributing, to some ex-

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 248.

tent, to the bodies the individual force which is constitutive of the self.[1]

The idea of substance can be derived from the elements of the fact of consciousness or from the primitive duality. It refers to what subsists or remains constant at the core of various manifestations, and to what is beyond the manifestations as their common bond of union. The first is the total form of effort which remains identical in the two terms, force and resistance; the second is the organic resistance which is associated with all sensible modifications. This organic resistance is a permanent base, a true substrate. It is no more an abstraction than is the subject of effort, or the self, of which it is the correlate. Beyond all variable modifications of sensibility, effort and resistance remain the same. They are subject and object or antecedent and consequent term of the fundamental relation of personality.[2]

Thus in effort and resistance, as they exist in inner experience, Biran finds the source of the abstract notions of substance and force. It is through the neglect of this ultimate source that insoluble questions have arisen in regard to the ideas. Some have wished to make the ideas absolute and to derive the real from the possible; others have denied the reality of the ideas, since they could not reduce them to clear representations of sense or imagination. The idea of substance and the idea of force which are derived from ourselves and conceived by a reference to ourselves have all the reality and truth of facts of inner experience; but their proof becomes obscure when they are applied to external things. When we abstract entirely from the consciousness of the self and leave only the bare exercise of effort, we have the material, so to speak, of the idea of absolute force. Yet, in spite of ourselves, a confused consciousness of our own force will mingle with that abstract idea. Similarly, by abstracting bare resistance from the consciousness of a continuously resisting limit, we form the notion of absolute or possible resistance, that is, of substance. This idea is always conceived under the form of passivity and modeled after the organic resistance which the self perceives when it is distinguishing itself in the exercise of effort.

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 249.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 250.

Thus the abstract notion of substance is more obscure than that of force, and belongs to a point of view more foreign to us. When the primitive duality as the source of all knowledge is analyzed into its two elements, the subjective or formal side, the idea of force or activity, is made the principle of psychology. The objective element, as the prototype of the idea of substance, is taken as the principle of physics. This order cannot be set aside, that is, the notion of substance cannot be made the principle of psychology, or the notion of force the principle of physics, without distorting the purposes of the sciences. Moreover, if either principle is considered as absolute and the source which the idea must have in a primary relation is neglected, the true process of knowledge is inverted and the result is an abstract science which is foreign to the reality of things.[1] We find this scheme of the sciences repeated and elaborated in the psychology.

The primitive ideas always elude the imagination and sense-perception. The sense of touch, although it is very important in externalizing our ideas of force and substance, has nothing to do with their formation. We do not touch the substrate of tactual forms any more than we see the real substance of light. Substance cannot be represented by the imagination. It is conceived only in necessary relation to a certain union of qualities of which it is regarded as the subject. But, although the imagination has to do only with combined elements, or groups; reason must nevertheless presuppose the reality of the subject. It is the unrepresented subject and not the modes that is conceived as existing and acting.[2]

The reality of the principle of causality depends, according to Maine de Biran, upon the possibility of identifying it with self-consciousness or with the primitive fact of consciousness. We substitute a logical entity for a fact when we begin with the abstract idea and set up the category of causality, or when we regard it as a form of the mind, or a mere regulative principle of knowledge. But we do not recognize the real value of the principle of causality when we regard it simply as the law of phenomenal suc-

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 253.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 254–5.

cession. It is easy, however, to show the difference, or even the opposition, that there is between the idea of succession and the idea of productive cause. The empiricists failed to do away with the real application of causality. They tried to reduce all cause to laws of succession; but while they were able to discover some laws and to classify effects, the real efficient causes remained indeterminate. Each class of phenomena involved an unknown something which was felt to be incommensurate with any sensible idea. The efficient cause obstinately persisted in the mind even when its manner of operation was entirely hidden from the imagination. The failure of the empiricists to substitute the relation of succession for that of causality has been an argument in favor of the *a priori* character of the latter principle. *A priori* ideas, however, disappear before introspection. The idea of cause has its primitive type in self-consciousness where it is indentified with the idea of effort.

When Biran considered Hume's analysis of the idea of power, he found in the facts which were brought out another reason for the view already presented. After having shown that the principle of causality could not have its ground in external experience, Hume asked if the idea of efficient cause, or necessary relation, could be based on the inner consciousness of our own force, that is, on the power of the will over the physical organs or mental processes. He concluded that it could not. But the conclusion resulted from the denial of our ability to experience any force, in any other way than we experience the activity in natural phenomena. He made the value of external experience coördinate with that of internal experience, and thus cut himself off from the possibility of finding what he sought. In his view the influence of volition over the bodily organs "is a fact, which, like all other natural events, can be known only by experience, and can never be foreseen from any apparent energy or power in the cause." [1] Biran maintains that it is not a question of foreseeing, but rather of sensing or apprehending the existence of the force. Yet, as a matter of fact, the will or the very first voluntary effort is determinate and carries with it a vague consciousness of success,

[1] Hume's *Enquiries* (Selby-Bigge), pp. 64–65.

otherwise we should have merely desire. It is this characteristic which distinguishes voluntary movement from sensitive reaction, and the facts of inner experience from natural phenomena. Hume thought we could not know actual volitional force because we do not know how it acts. His illusory assimilation of the two kinds of knowledge is the basis of his mistake. We know the power of the will over the voluntary muscular system, but we cannot represent it to ourselves as we can represent an external movement. The two processes are entirely different. We cannot perceive colors by picturing to ourselves the optic nerve, the retina, and the luminous object. To know objectively the occult relations of our own volitions, we need at the same time to be ourselves and another. The power is known as presented only to the motor being. The effect or movement is represented only as we separate ourselves entirely from the being to which we attribute the effect. It is only thus that the latter becomes an external phenomenon. When we wish to conceive the power in its effect, we must establish the homogeneity between the two terms of the primitive relation of causality. We must take account of the fact of consciousness. There the subject of the effort perceives himself, in inner experience, as the cause of a movement which is simultaneously sensed, not represented, as an effect.

The inevitable effect of habituation is to lessen, by insensible degrees, the consciousness of the movements or acts which are repeated. This result is especially marked in the case of inner experience. The principle becomes dim as its external manifestations grow clear. Just as a light of uniform intensity to which we are accustomed is not perceptible in itself and is known only from the objects which it illuminates, so voluntary effort tends to disappear among the various modifications to which it gives a base and an individual form. Thus the feeling of power or will decreases, and the causes of external phenomena get the ascendency in consciousness. Necessitated by our nature to direct our attention to these causes, we come to attribute to them the very activity by which we have made them our objects. Thus, habit which Hume regarded as an illusory influence in the formation of our idea of cause is the very factor which tends most to blind

us to the origin of that idea and the true principle of its application.[1] The same circumstance which led to the attack of skepticism upon the principle of causality has motived the errors of dogmatism. The natural relation which unites motor force to its limiting term and the subject of effort to resistance has been construed in terms of a mysterious influence, of the intervention of God, and of preëstablished harmony.

Lang gives a very sympathetic account of Biran's principle of causality, but is not, I think, able to vindicate its epistemological validity. He regards Biran's deduction of the category of causality as a successful answer to Hume's logical criticism, but concludes "that the French spiritualist has limited far too narrowly the sources from which the causal concept can be derived." We have as clear an evidence of "the spontaneous activity of the soul upon idea process, as we have of the influence of "the will on the physical organism." "Psychical causality" should be placed at least on a par with "muscular effort."[2] Lang distinguishes the causal law, "everything in the world has its cause," from the causal principle, "the existence and unchangeableness of natural law." "Biran seems to have felt these difficulties," since he thought that "our belief in the unchangeability of natural law rested" on the fact that "we must necessarily view natural forces after the analogy of the I as incorporeal and consequently unchangeable."[3]

Maine de Biran finds that unity and identity, as well as cause, are included in the primitive fact. From this original source they are extended by a kind of generalization to the phenomenal objects of external nature. The self perceives itself in effort, as constantly of the same unitary form. From the single self are derived the ideas of the unity of substance, cause, and finite existence. The objects of nature resist the one will, or effort, and can only be conceived in relation to that fundamental unity. In a purely sensitive existence all is simultaneous. But it is the nature of the motor force, which constitutes the self, to act only in an order of succession, that is, to be a single act of perception at

[1] *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, p. 265.

[2] *Maine de Biran und die neuere Philosophie*, pp. 59-62.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

a time, for the very reason that it is simple. That which is simultaneous in sensation becomes successive in thought. But all succession must have a first term, and this leads to the question of the origin of personality. Identity, like substance, is based on the primitive fact of consciousness and has a double original type, in the subject and in the resistance of effort. Personality cannot be established on either of the terms taken alone.

According to Maine de Biran, Locke did not distinguish sharply enough the true personal identity which applies to the subject and to immediate perception, from the identity of an object of repeated perceptions and from soul substance. The two latter conceptions are derived from the first and should not be confused with it. The identity of soul substance is deduced from the identity of consciousness; therefore the question whether personal identity can change while the soul substance remains the same is unnecessary.[1]

Freedom is another ultimate idea which depends for its origin and validity on the nature of the self. Maine de Biran says: "Freedom considered as the feeling of a power in exercise presupposes the reality of that power, as the mere feeling of our existence proves to us the reality of that existence."[2] Muscular sensation can become active, determined by the will, and passive, influenced by a force beyond the self. In this alternation in the fact of consciousness, we have the type of the ideas of freedom and necessity. To call freedom in question is to doubt the feeling of the self. Biran thinks that any one could deny his own existence as well as his freedom. Erroneous opinions in regard to freedom are occasioned by a confusion between desire and will. He defines the relation as follows: "Will is circumscribed by the same limits as power," "desire, on the contrary, begins where power ends and includes all the field of our passivity."[3] A further cause of error in this connection, according to Biran, is a very strong tendency toward the unconditioned, that is, a substitution of reasoning based upon the absolute nature of

[1] *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, pp. 279–280.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 291.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 290.

substances for the evidence of the primitive fact of consciousness found by introspection.

Cousin shows very clearly the difficulties in this derivation of freedom from the perception of muscular activity. "The theory of Maine de Biran considers the free act only in its external manifestation, in a remarkable fact without doubt, but which itself supposes the fact quite as profound and intimate, the fact of willing with its immediate and proper affect. Here, in my opinion, is the primitive type of liberty. . . . When we seek freedom in an act, we may be deceived in two ways: either we seek it in the intellectual element of the act, the consciousness of the motives, the deliberation, the preference, the choice, and then we cannot find it; for it is evident that the different motives . . . command the intelligence. Or we seek liberty in the physical element of the act, and we do not find it there at least constantly, and we are tempted to conclude that liberty is but an accident." [1]

Maine de Biran distinguishes the ideas of reflection, substance, force, unity, and identity from abstract ideas in the purely logical sense of general notions. All general ideas are abstract, but not all abstract notions are general ideas. In analyzing a concrete totality into its elementary parts, the attention isolates elements which really exist only in the totality. But in the case of generalizations or comparison of different objects, the results are qualities which are common to the objects. The ideas of reflection differ both from the products of abstraction by the attention and from the products of abstraction and comparison. The ideas of reflection are individual and simple while the logical abstractions are collective. The general notions become less real and individual as they are extended to a greater number of objects; while the ideas of reflection approach nearer to real unity as they become more abstract. Logical abstractions have a purely nominal value; but the abstract ideas of reflection have a real value independent of any external application. Biran concludes that we should analyze the ultimate principles of science, if they are not founded upon facts of consciousness. When, on the contrary, the simple ideas of reflection are made the basis of

[1] Cousin, *History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. III, Lecture XXV.

science, there is no opportunity for analysis. Science did not exist before the self; and analysis cannot extend beyond the self. Metaphysics will be the real positive science of inner phenomena and of all that can be deduced from these phenomena, provided it starts with the fact of consciousness as a primitive "given," to be established but not to be explained or analyzed. It will be an abstract science lost in definitions and hypotheses without beginning or end, if it starts from general principles and attempts to establish science beyond all actual existence.[1]

Maine de Biran very naturally refers to Locke's treatment of general ideas. Empiricism tends to regard all concepts as having only a logical value; Locke, however, distinguished between mixed modes which are mere combinations of ideas, and general ideas which necessarily admit of a real essence. Locke nevertheless "neglects too much the inner model which the mind must consult in forming" the ideas.[2] The model is not the less real because it is not external.

Such in outline is Maine de Biran's metaphysics which is based upon the fact of inner experience, the direct perception of the self, and the consequent extension of the characteristics of the primitive fact to cover the regulative principles of experience. The immediate problem is to consider how far these principles derived from psychological analysis can be regarded as furnishing an exhaustive account of the epistemological categories with which they are associated. Sir William Hamilton shows very conclusively that the perception of activity fails to account for the necessary character of the judgment of causality. After criticizing the subjective perception of causal efficiency on the ground that there is no consciousness of causal connection between volition and motion, he says: "Admitting that causation were cognizable, and that perception and self-consciousness were competent to its apprehension, still as these faculties could only take note of individual causations, we should be wholly unable, out of such empirical acts, to evolve the quality of necessity and universality by which this notion is distinguished. Admitting that we had

[1] *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, Vol. I, p. 305.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 184–185.

really observed the agency of any number of causes, still this would not explain to us, how we are unable to think a manifestation of existence without thinking it as an effect. Our internal experience, especially in the relations of our volitions to their effects, may be useful in giving us a clearer notion of causality; but it is altogether incompetent to account for what there is in it of the quality of necessity."[1] Kühtmann substantially agrees with Hamilton's second criticism. While he thinks that Biran was right in deriving "the objective concept of force from the subjective process"[2] of volition, he maintains that "the development of the concept of causality, that every change (effect) *necessarily* postulates another (change) (cause) for its genesis, belongs to the evolution of language and abstract thought."[3]

In this connection we may recall the historical relations of Maine de Biran. It was his belief that he had established philosophy on a factual ground. He was an empiricist, the intellectual descendant of Locke and Condillac, and like his predecessors is primarily an epistemologist rather than an ontologist. And it is clearly from the epistemological, and not from the ontological, point of view that he treats the concepts of substance and causality. As Locke assumed a material substrate in which the qualities of sensation inhere, and as Condillac had a stimulus which was beyond consciousness and never completely included in it, so Biran found a resistance to the will, which ultimately remained an extra-conscious datum. This is one of the prototypes of the idea of substance, the other is found in the volitional subject. There is for Maine de Biran, as for Locke and Condillac, a datum outside consciousness which is assumed as a condition of volitional activity. For this reason he did not find it necessary to regard the will as always active. The mind does not always think. In an ontological sense the will is not ultimate, it is merely the first principle of consciousness. The simple sentient life to which the will is always related, and in which it meets with a reality other than itself, becomes more prominent in the psychology. That is the part of Maine de Biran's work which

[1] *Lectures*, Vol. II, p. 392.
[2] *Maine de Biran*, p. 172.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

we have next to consider. The philosopher would be the first to emphasize the importance of the resistence which the will meets. He made no attempt to reach a fundamental unity; but very explicitly maintained that the primitive fact of consciousness was based upon a relation which involved two terms. Life, which is simple in animality, the merely sentient experience, becomes dual in humanity, that is, in conscious experience.[1]

[1] *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, p. 4.

SECTION VI.

Divisions of the Psychology.

We now turn to the treatment of psychology which occupies the larger part of the chief work. According to Maine de Biran, an account of the principles of consciousness, even when their relation is shown to the primitive fact of voluntary effort, is not an exhaustive statement of the characteristics of human nature. Before the life of relation begins, there are impressions and instinctive movements coördinated with the impressions, and there is also, at least, a slight degree of pleasure and pain. Life involves the fact that the organism is affected either pleasantly or unpleasantly. Affections are the simple modes of pleasure and pain which make up a life purely sentient, and out of relation to self or to objective existences. There is a class of passive faculties which are subordinate to and developed with the affections. These constitute the animal nature, but since man is an active self as well as a sentient animal, they make up only one element of human nature. They differ essentially from the active faculties of the intelligent being, yet in man the two elements are closely united and constantly exercise an influence on each other. The factors are combined in a manner which varies according to the degree of development which the relational life has attained. In order to make his method clear, Biran attempts to isolate the two kinds of elements in human nature. By a preliminary analysis he hopes to gain a higher stage of perfection in his account of the psychological compounds. When the elements are once abstractly isolated, it is possible to understand the part that each plays in the phenomena of the mental life. By a study of the relation of the active subject to the purely affective life, which gives the first real content to the act of will, Biran concluded that the phenomena of feeling, sensation, perception, judgment, volition, *etc.*, could be classified in four systems. According to him the classification is not to represent logical

abstractions, it is not founded on vague analogies, but is dependent on real factual distinctions.

The first, or affective, system has to do with the simple modes of passive sensibility. Under this head there is an analysis of the various kinds of sensation considered with reference to simple affective impressions which they are capable of receiving, and with reference to the forms of stimulus which are correlated with their specific sensibility, but without regard to effort or the activity of the self.

In the second, or sensitive system, the personality is constituted by active effort. Our subject is no longer a merely sentient being which simply lives, that is, is affected without knowing its own life. An active self is united to the passive, sentient organism. The self perceives that it is in relation to the different sensible modifications and retains its identity while the modifications change. Nevertheless, at this stage, the self is merely the spectator of passive modes which are produced in the living organism without the active exercise of its own force. Yet the second system differs essentially from the first. The self feels the affective impressions, it localizes them in particular organs, and attributes them to causes outside itself. That is, certain relations of causality which the affections do not primarily include are associated with them, and the various modifications are no longer mere physiological facts ; they are modifications of a self. Sensations are the "first composite modes." "The self is united to sensible impressions and participates as an interested spectator, without exercising its own characteristic activity."[1] This sensitive system is the first in the order of knowledge, but the second in the order of progress by which the sensitive and motor being raises itself from a purely affective state to personality and the various degrees of knowledge.

The third or perceptive system includes modes to which the self is more closely related and in which it enters as an active participant. This relation requires that the organ which receives the impression be under the control of motor force. Although the force is still subordinate to the impression, it gives the sensa-

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 6.

tion the form of a unity in multiplicity. A perception is an impression in which the self participates by an action which is subsequent to the effect of the external object. Biran defines this third system as follows: "The perceptive system includes all the phenomena arising from the action of sensible objects combined with that of a will, which is still subordinate to the impressions that occasion or motive its first exercise." [1]

In the fourth system, the self is united with modes which are characteristically active. They cannot begin or persist without an express act of will. The object or external agent is here subordinate; the impression is dependent upon activity which is volitionally determined. The active modes are homogeneous with the primitive constitution of the personality. They are only an extension of effort; but they refer to some foreign resistance or to results which are perfectly distinct in consciousness from the cause which produces them. Here the will has, at the same time, immediate apperception of the cause and intuition of the effect. The basis of the fourth system is thus: "The act of reflection joined with perception, or the fact of inner experience (*sens intime*) with the objective phenomena." [2]

The systems just outlined serve as the general plan for Maine de Biran's psychology. In his opinion the divisions have a real basis in fact, but in reality they are logical rather than introspective distinctions. The whole construction depends upon the different ratios in which conscious activity is related to the underlying affective life. The affective life itself, however, as already noted, is extraneous to consciousness. It is not a fact in the sense of a primitive fact, but of a fact for an other, an outside observer. In this respect Biran's psychology may be regarded as based upon logical abstraction.

We shall consider his psychology more in detail by referring to his treatment of each of the four systems. It is in this connection that he shows the part that the will actually plays in his philosophy.

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 9.

SECTION VII.

Affective System.

Simple affection is the element that is left of a complete sensation when we abstract the self, together with the forms of space and time and the idea of causality. Affection, however, is not regarded as an abstraction, but as a real mode which makes up all our existence at the first and at all other times when the intellect becomes entirely inactive, as in sleep, or when the self is completely lost in sense impressions.[1] Lower forms of life always remain at the affective stage. The beginning of the capacity to be affected is possessed by the simplest types of organic life; and the higher animals can be regarded as a multitude of lives united into a single life, or as a multitude of constituent affections united into a single result. If the living being is considered as an aggregate, and we abstract from individual unity, two features can be distinguished in an impression made on any particular organ; first, the modification which that particular organ undergoes, and secondly, the modification of the entire sensitive system. The relative importance of these two modifications constitutes the affection as painful or pleasant in itself, that is, quite apart from comparison or even from consciousness. If the particular modification is relatively much stronger than the general modification, the affection is painful, if not, it is pleasant. The painful or pleasant impression sets up movements which respectively tend to set aside or to maintain the impression.

At the beginning there is a vague feeling of life without personality. Life is the condition of sentiency. The impressions, whether they are of organic or of external origin, are confused with the general feeling of life, and for a long time retain this indefinite character. But with the further development of life the general excitatory character of the impressions diminishes and the particular affections can manifest themselves. Thus the materials

[1] *Cf. Œuvres philosophiques*, Vol. 3, pp. 239-240.

of distinct perception are separated and the personal element alone is wanting to complete the first phenomenon of external representation. The impressions derived from the different sense organs differ in the degree of ease with which they lend themselves to association with the self. Some always preserve more or less the character of general affections and thus remain somewhat confused; others are more distinct and more disposed by nature to be localized or coördinated with their particular sense organs. The latter class easily admits the forms of space and time.

In reference to the sense of touch, Maine de Biran says, that when we abstract effort from the affections, they reduce to an absolutely passive character and are deprived of all perceptive elements, of all form of space and time and of all idea of cause or substance. The affections correlated with the organs of taste and smell are very slow to differentiate themselves from the general affective system and even then tend to revert to a confused condition. But in the visual and auditory affections there are characteristics which promote the association of the passive affections with the self. These immediate passive intuitions are, in the case of vision, a natural coördination of colors and the "vibratory" character in virtue of which images are prolonged and reproduced, and in the case of audition, the simultaneous and successive distinctions of tones. In both instances the passive intuitions are due to the anatomical structure of the sense organs.[1]

Every modification leaves a trace in the organism, and thus influences later modes of existence. Yet there is no memory at the affective stage, since there is no consciousness. The feelings of attraction or repulsion, which become explicit in the conscious state, are often the results of affective modifications which the living being has sustained in a preconscious state.[2] The intuitions also leave images which are reproduced spontaneously either in their original order or in some accidental arrangement. And the movements of simple reaction to stimulus leave after them tendencies from which spontaneous movements arise. Spontaneous movements are accompanied by a sensation of a unique kind.

[1] *Cf. Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, pp. 25–31.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 35.

In its origin this sensation is not attended by the feeling of motor force; but that feeling is immediately related to it. At this point the feeling of effort or of the self arises. Thus sensation and affection are for Maine de Biran the means of developing active faculties, but they are not transformed into faculties of a higher order. [1]

The affective system just outlined is the foundation on which psychology is developed rather than a part of the science itself. With the sensitive system in the next section we have the beginning of the psychology in the strict sense of the term. The sharp distinction between the merely affective life and consciousness is also brought out in the work *Division des faits psychologiques et physiologiques.* Biran says: "The self is primitive . . . there is nothing anterior or superior to it in the order of knowledge." [2] In another place he speaks of the line "which separates forever the physical from the moral sciences, and especially the science of living and sentient organisms, physiology, from the inner science of beings which are intelligent and active, moral and free, psychology or ethics." [3]

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 39.
[2] *Œuvres philosophiques*, Vol. III, p. 174.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 144.

SECTION VIII.

Sensitive System.

The second, or sensitive system, is constituted by the simple union of the self with the phenomena of the first system, already described. When the subject of effort distinguishes itself from the body as a whole, or the various parts of the body that are subject to the control of will, there is a natural foundation for judgment. This is the beginning of the relational life. Maine de Biran here follows the general scheme of classification which he adopted in the first system. The self is simply associated with impressions and invests them with the forms of space and time ; it becomes a spectator without producing changes by an express act. By this simple union of the self with the affections we have affective sensations, by the union of the self with intuitions, representative sensations, and by the union of the self with those effects of affections and intuitions on the organism, memory.

To begin with the union of the self and the simple affections, we find that the resulting affective sensations are of two kinds, particular or general, according as they are, or are not, localized in the body. In the latter case the feeling of effort tends to be confused or absorbed in the affective sensation ; in the former case impression and resistance to effort are felt as occupying the same place, but are not confused.

The intuitions differ from the affections in the fact that they become more distinct through continued repetition. The self, moreover, is united with them in a particular way. They can never obscure the feeling of the self, and when united with it the relation is preserved with more constancy and uniformity than in the former case. They also share in the primitive mode of coördination in space. The self from its very origin cannot be separated from this mode ; it does not, however, change the form of the intuition but receives that form ready made from laws of the organism which do not depend upon volition.

There are three kinds of memory to be distinguished, personal, modal, and objective. The first is a necessary condition of the other two. In fact, it is the simple union of the sense of effort with the organism. The sense of effort which does not result in perception, but only extends to the voluntary muscles, constitutes mere consciousness and also the duration of the self, or personal identity, that makes memory possible. An examination of the waking consciousness shows that the subject of effort recognizes immediately his identity, his continued duration; he senses that he is the same that he was before sleep. No special impression to motive distinct memories, nor any determinate relation between the present and past time is necessary in order to bring about the feeling of identity. For these reasons Maine de Biran concludes that personal identity is sensed independently of affections, or of the passive intuitions of sensibility; that identity, or the duration of our own personal existence, is the cause of objective memory, not the result as Locke maintained;[1] and that the feeling of uniform duration is the necessary antecedent of the idea of time. A very low degree of self-activity is sufficient to give us the idea of personal identity and the idea of duration. But some degree of activity is indispensable. The idea of self and the idea of time do not result either from the play of merely external impressions on the organism or from the pure cognition of external relations.

Modal memory refers to the quality of the modification which the self sustains. It is not inherent in simple affections, but only in sensations which are reproduced in a part of the body where they have previously been localized. These sensations are not recognized in their intensity but only in their general nature.

In objective memory, it is no longer merely our own being which we recognize, either immediately or in an internally repeated modification; we recognize or judge that an external representation is similar to itself, by correlating with it our own sense of duration. We recognize the resemblance of an actual intuition, with an image which is the result of a previous intuition. The element of identity depends upon personal memory,

[1] *Cf. Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, Ch. XXVII, § 11.

while the element of resemblance, which is also essential to objective memory, depends upon external representation.

The most important fact to be noted concerning the sensitive system is that the self, when it unites with the simple modes of affection and intuition, invests them with the forms, which belong originally to it, and which are the conditions of its existence. The consequence is that all conscious phenomena necessarily involve the idea of cause. "That cause is self if the mode is active or perceived as the actual result of a voluntary effort; it is not-self, if it is a passive impression sensed as opposed to that effort, or independent of all exercise of the will." [1] "The *belief* in a cause, not-self, differs essentially from the *knowledge* of an external object. The first can be based simply on a sort of resistance to even the vaguest desire; the second rests on perceptible resistance to effort, or determinate will." [2] In this connection we have to remember that the self for Biran is a fact of experience, a relation discovered by introspection, or else we are in danger of giving his system too idealistic an interpretation. The affections united to belief, or the vague idea of a productive cause, take the character of relations and are called emotions.

There are as many kinds of emotions as there are affections associated with the self; but they can be divided into two general classes, emotions of love and emotions of hate. The first includes joy, hope, and security, according as the desired object conforms to our wish, or probably will thus conform, or is believed to be in our control. The emotions of hate are sadness, grief, and fear. In sadness we believe in the existence of a cause that can affect us disagreeably. In grief we believe that we cannot escape, and in fear, that we probably shall not escape the effects of the object. The emotions can be called desires. Desire differs essentially from need or want. The sentient being has need of all impressions which tend to maintain or develop its existence. And on that principle it seeks to avoid or repel all which are contrary to or destructive of existence. But the simple need does not make desire until it is joined to belief. Voluntary

[1] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, p. 67.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 68.

movement may result from the influence of desire, but it may also be contrary to desire. In this respect it differs from instinctive movement in which the will can have no part.

With the consideration of affective sensation, representative sensation, memory, and emotion, Biran has accounted for all the classes of psychological facts which consist in the relation of the self in its simplest form, mere consciousness, with organic life. In the next section, the perceptive system will include facts which involve a greater prominence of the self, that is, a more active will.

SECTION IX.

Perceptive System.

The attention is the basis of the third system of psychological facts, and it is only because attention is involved that the phenomena of the perceptive system differ from those of the sensitive system. Attention is nothing but the will in activity. But by this activity certain psychological modes acquire characters which they do not possess merely in their own nature and as subordinate to the laws of animal sensibility. Attention is a degree of effort superior to that involved in mere consciousness, that is, to the degree of effort which renders the external senses capable of perceiving or representing confusedly the objects that stimulate them. Here the effort is determined by an express will. The perception which was confused at first is isolated from all the accompanying impressions that tend to obscure it. The attention refers especially to the representative sensations which are already coördinated in space and time. It does not exercise any direct influence on the affective impressions. The act of attention does not render the impressions in themselves more vivid, but fixes the organs that are subject to the will, on the object, turns them away from all other causes of impressions, and thus renders the object relatively more clear.

In reference to the connection of attention with the particular sense organs, Maine de Biran notes that attention is not related to impressions of tastes and odors in so far as they are passively excited or received, but only in as far as they depend upon voluntary movement. The stimulus which sets up auditory sensations is at first the occasion of merely affective phenomena. All distinct perception or special activity of the attention is excluded. But the impressions are coördinated in time; and under this form of intuition, the attention is able to give them a character of activity. We do not determine what we shall *hear*, but we can

listen, that is, give to the sounds a more or less sustained attention which results in making the impressions more distinct.[1]

Attention is a very important factor in vision. The structure of the eye is peculiarly adapted to movement and consequently is under direct control of the will. The result for consciousness is very different, according as we simply see an object or observe it with "active regard."[2] In the first case, we have a number of confused images; in the second case, one distinct image. Without the attention, several objects are sensed passively and simultaneously; with the attention, there are rapid movements which coördinate objects into one whole. In this connection it is interesting to notice Maine de Biran's account of the effect of attention on after-images. He says, that he has often tried the experiment of looking at the glass of a well-lighted window. If he looked at the window for some time, while dreaming of something else, the image of the window remained in his eyes, and he could see it almost anywhere. But if he looked at the window attentively, with a view of preserving the image, there was no such result, he no longer had an image, but a very distinct memory of the object.[3] Attention makes the colors of an object relatively more clear and distinct. This effect, however, is brought about indirectly, that is, the influence of the attention is limited to the voluntary muscles, and does not extend to the fibers of the retina. Although attentive vision always proceeds by a succession of movements and is thus voluntary in principle, the movements become so rapid, easy, and automatic that they disappear from consciousness. The sensitive and motor being participates in vision, but does not realize, even in the most distinct perception, its own active part.

The sense of touch is especially important for Maine de Biran, because it is the means by which we have a direct knowledge of the not-self, and thus is the basis of the judgment of externality and of perception. The primitive fact of effort gives us a knowledge of our own body; but the degree of effort, which is the condition of mere consciousness is only sufficient to suggest an

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 91–94.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 97.
[3] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 97.

indeterminate not-self. The tactual perceptions abstracted from resistance furnish unsupported images. It is the association of pressure with a resistance, sensed simultaneously in the same organ, which completes the relation of externality and establishes all our objective knowledge. The pressure alone, or the resistance alone, might be confused with an increase of inertia or with the resistance of the human body; but the union of a pressure and a resistance, which is opposed and not proportional to effort gives the idea of an external body. Neither visual nor tactual representations coördinated in space can give the idea of matter. The idea of a force capable of resisting voluntary movement, is needed as the substantial support of all representations. It is the center around which the sensations, especially those of pressure and color are grouped. In virtue of the association of the idea of cause with the sensation of pressure, that primary cause which, as the not-self of effort, is indeterminate becomes positive and determinate, as an absolute force. The absolute force differs very essentially from simple muscular resistance which always yields to the effort that constitutes the self. The latter is the essence of our own body, the immediate limit of effort; the former is the essence of external bodies, the mediate limit of effort. The existence of the external force has need of a sign in order to manifest itself in consciousness; and the natural sign is the representation of tactual extent. All the sensations which suggest the idea of an indeterminate not-self can be construed as signs of that idea; but pressure, which is associated in an immediate manner with the feeling of absolute resistance, is in a particular manner the sign of the existence of a positive and determinate cause. External nature is known directly in touch, but in the other senses only indirectly and as they are coördinated with touch.

After considering the origin of the judgment of externality, Maine de Biran analyzes the various forms that the judgment takes. In the primitive sense of effort we have a localization of the organs of the body. This can be effected without the sense of pressure, that is, by means of the simple resistance which the two hands, for example, could offer each other, even if they had lost all sensation. But this is not a localization by representation

in space, it is a mere intuition that the body and its various parts coexist with the subject of effort.

The substantial judgment is reached by abstracting from all the passive elements in the sense of touch and supposing a single organ, that is, by referring only to a unitary resistance which is essentially relative to unitary effort. To carry out this conception, it is not necessary to think of the resistance as absolutely unyielding unless we limit the subject of effort. According to Maine de Biran, the Stoical idea of a world-soul was founded on the thought of a will which is effective in the whole of nature. The important thing, however, is to consider the nature of the unitary resistance which opposes the will. If we abstract from all passive impressions and imagine a consciousness made up entirely of effort, then the object which human consciousness attains only by abstraction, is for this hypothetical consciousness an immediate perception, the single real existence related to the self. This judgment is substantial because it is the basis of all the composite relations of conscious life. Owing to the presence of sensations, we never have the true unity of resistance perfectly simple in the mind; but, nevertheless, it forms together with the unity of effort, the double unity, which is the foundation of all that we perceive, within or without ourselves. On this simple relation rest the primary qualities of Locke to which is accorded a real existence in bodies. The qualities constitute, for Biran, the essence of bodies and they are attributed to a unitary resistance. But he points out that impenetrability and inertia are more fundamental than extent and motion.

The substantial judgment by which we attribute resistance and impenetrability to body carries with it a character of necessity; the modal judgment, on the other hand, attributes the so-called secondary qualities, which are in reality simple signs, to the idea of body. It is an unfortunate misuse of language to call affective sensations, secondary qualities of bodies. The affective sensation, that is, the simple union of the self with the affections, is experienced as belonging to our own body; the resistance is experienced as belonging to an external body. They are not confused, but as the second is constantly accompanied by the first a

new relation, that of causality, is set up between them. The exercise of active touch does not, however, constitute the relation of causality; but, by its influence, the indeterminate cause, or not-self, the object of belief, becomes determinate as a positive force which can modify the sensibility in a particular manner.[1]

There is a peculiar kind of non-affective impressions that occupy an intermediate place between the modes of our sensibility and the modes of resistance. These impressions, Maine de Biran describes as perceptions united to the relation of externality. They are the subjects of his objective judgments. These perceptions are naturally projected into a vague space from which the self is distinguished in consciousness. They neither belong to the organs, like affective sensations, nor are they at first localized in the resisting continuum. The localization indicated in the objective judgment is the product of the experience of touch and of voluntary movement. The perceptions of vision and passive touch which are given at first in a two-dimensional non-resisting continuum receive a definite direction and distance from the practice of touch.

Each of the sensations, abstracted from its affective character and also from its volitional elements, can be regarded as adapted to an aspect of the sensible world. They all are dependent upon the forms of sense, but none the less are caused by external bodies which are their permanent subjects. They stand in the same relation to the primary qualities of bodies that our affective sensations stand to the will. They are the true secondary qualities.

While the intuitions, or passive perceptions, leave after them images which are proportional to the original impressions; the active perceptions, which are dependent upon the attention, leave representative ideas that share in their active nature. The intellectual operations which refer only accidentally to the passive impressions are always involved in active perception. The attention is not related in the same manner to all the senses; and consequently there is the problem of determining the relation of the various active faculties, memory, judgment, and comparison,

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 130–131.

considered as consecutive to the active exercise of vision and touch.

The self can revive only what it has contributed to the impressions. In the case of vision the sphere of voluntary activity is limited to an attention successively directed to the various parts of the field already presented in passive vision. But in the case of touch, by a series of movements to each of which corresponds a memory, the subject creates a unitary resistance. Here the associations are voluntary, as distinguished from the accidental associations of passive memory (the memory described under the sensitive system [1]). The visual images precede and complicate the recall of the forms, but the sense of touch gives us the true notion of forms. On the exercise of this active touch is founded the act of memory, in the strict meaning of the term, "which is nothing but the repetition of the simple judgment of externality originally associated and repeated with each impression." [2]

At this stage we have Maine de Biran's transition from attention through comparison and generalization to the unifying function of intelligence. Comparison is not absolutely different from attention, but is an immediate result of the activity of attention. Perception is always unitary, like attention, and consequently we never can compare two perceptions, but only one perception with the trace left by another impression.[3] If judgment is defined as the comparison of two ideas, the idea must mean more than an image. The idea must really involve three terms, the perceiving subject, the mode perceived and the exterior term to which the mode is related. In the comparison of two modes, for example, two colors attributed to the same object, the subject and the exterior term may remain the same, while only the modes compared vary. The result will be resemblance or diversity.

Spontaneous generalizations precede all exercise of the active faculties. Beginning with these vague generalizations, the attention abstracts and compares to form regular classes, which seem

[1] *Cf.* pp. 48, 49.
[2] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, p. 151.
[3] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 155.

to embrace all the phenomena of nature under general titles. These general ideas depend upon the modifications compared, and consequently have a value relative to our organism. The classifications by comparison fail to deal satisfactorily with the reflective notions, such as substance and cause, since these ideas are identical and universal, and cannot be coördinated by resemblances.

The distinction between the abstract notions of reflection and the general ideas of comparison serves Maine de Biran both as a methodological principle and as a solution of the great question of mediæval philosophy. The attention which compares variable modifications and fixes on relations of resemblance, furnishes the method of the physical and the natural sciences; while reflection, which deals with the invariable elements of the primitive fact, the self and the resistance, together with their related phenomena, opens to us the mathematical and psychological sciences. The general ideas have no more value than the nominalist attributed to them; but the reflective notions have all the being which the realist attributed to universals.

After this very abstract analysis of the elements of an abstract psychological order,[1] Maine de Biran takes up the unifying function of consciousness, as it appears in attention. The human mind, according to him, tends constantly to reduce all the variety of its modes, objects and representations, to a unity of idea. This principle applies alike to the direct perceptions of the senses and to the most elaborate constructions of intelligence. Our first sensible ideas, far from being given ready-made by the external world, are the products of a true activity, and the same rule holds of our conceptions of every order. The purely sentient being obeys laws of association which it cannot know. But the intelligent being prescribes the association of which he shall take account. He chooses freely the elements that he shall unite, and and finding within the models for his constructions, he forms archetypal ideas of totality, harmony, and beauty, under which natural phenomena are classified. The faculty of creating these ideas is the highest attribute of intelligence. The principle of

[1] *Cf.* H. Taine, *Philosophes classiques du XIXe siècle*, p. 52, where Biran's work is described as "a mass of abstractions, a thicket of metaphysical thistles."

unity, which characterizes all intellectual combinations, does not appear in our merely sentient nature, but is based on the first exercise of perceptive activity.

In this connection it is very important to keep in mind the general facts of Biran's system, otherwise we might give this principle of unity a wider significance than it deserves. The principle of unity depends upon perceptive activity. Biran equates "perceptive activity" with "exercise of the attention," [1] and "attention is only the will itself in exercise." [2]

The perceptive system occupies an important place in the psychology. After an analysis of the respective relations of attention to the lower senses, to vision, and to touch, the transition is made through active touch to the judgment of an external world. The various forms of judgment, substantial, modal, and objective are then described. Next we have an account of memory, in the active sense, that is, as involving attention, and as opposed to the passive forms treated earlier in the psychology. Following memory come comparison and generalization which lead to a distinction, very important from Biran's point of view, between abstract notions and general ideas. Finally the section is closed by a description of the unifying activity of consciousness which is, however, worked out in more detail in the next, or reflective system.

[1] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, p. 137.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 83.

SECTION X.

Reflective System.

The fourth, or reflective, system, which includes the last division of psychological facts according to Maine de Biran's classification, differs from the perceptive system in considering only the elements of unity or permanence in consciousness. Reflection is "that faculty by which the mind perceives, in a group of sensations or in a combination of phenomena the common relation of all the elements to a fundamental unity." [1] For example, several modes or qualities to a unity of resistance, several different effects to the same cause, variable modification to the same self, or repeated movements to the same productive force. It is difficult for us to conceive the unity of self and of cause, of subject and object in the variety of sensations; but the unity is not the less necessarily given to us with every perception or representation of which we are conscious. In another place Biran equates apperception and reflection and defines apperception as "every impression in which the self can recognize itself as productive cause, while it distinguishes itself from the sensible effect which its action determines." [2]

Reflection has its origin in the inner perception of effort or of voluntary movement. In accordance with the method followed in the earlier parts of the psychological treatment, we first have a reference to the organic condition which makes reflection possible. The problem here is to determine the means by which the primitive facts become explicit for consciousness. In the case of perception, it was active touch which opened the way to the knowledge of the external world. The same means will not serve in the present case, because passive touch is mingled with active touch in the same sense organ. The desired ground for reflection is a condition in which the sense of effort is united to some sense organs in such a way that its products shall assume a sen-

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 225.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 9.

sible form entirely subordinate to the will. The motor and sensitive being must refer movements to itself, as the unique cause, and also refer to itself the impressions which result from these movements. Then the attention which is always directed to the external results of voluntary acts will not differ from the reflection which is centered on the feeling of free power that effectualizes those acts. The required condition is found in the sense of hearing, taken in connection with vocal activity. In an analysis of the correspondence between vocal movements and auditory impressions, we may hope to discover the original laws of reflection. While the voice and hearing are closely related, the sensitive and motor functions are naturally separated. This separation of the organ under control of the will from the sense organs prevents any confusion of volition and its results, but the close relation prevents any external interference. The activity which produces the vocal movements is reflected in perception. The individual thus has a redoubled perception of his own activity. "In the free repetition of the acts that his will determines, he has the consciousness of the power that performs them. He perceives the cause in the effect and the effect in the cause; he has a distinct feeling of the two terms of that fundamental relation, in a word, he reflects." [1] Vocal activity and auditory sensation thus have characteristics which make them unique organs of reflection. Hearing may be called the special sense of the understanding. Biran considers that Locke was wrong in accepting reflection as an innate faculty, and that even Condillac did not carry analysis far enough in this particular.[2]

The first act of reflection is a consciousness of voluntary activity by means of some modification which results at least in part from that activity, that is, the perception of the cause in the effect that is sensed. From this perception, reflection goes on to distinguish elements which are coördinated in the same group, to observe the mode of their coördination, and finally to rise to universal ideas. By the first act of reflection, the subject perceives itself, as such, distinct from the resisting limit; and by a

[1] *Op.-cit.*, Vol. II, p. 232.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 235.

similar act of reflection the motor being, in articulating sounds, distinguishes the vocal effort from the effects produced. With this distinction signs are established.

According to Maine de Biran, man speaks because he thinks, rather than thinks because he speaks. The first use of the intellectual sign (the word) is dependent upon the primitive fact of consciousness, that is, the immediate inner apperception of the subject of effort as distinct from the resisting limit. The impressions of the animal are confused. The sentient being does not distinguish ; it is not a self distinct from impressions. The defect is not in articulation, since some animals can imitate very well the sound of the human voice.

The ground of the reflective notion is in us independent of all signs. But there is a great difference between confusedly perceiving several modifications united in a whole, and perceiving distinctly the abstract modifications. The latter perception is made possible by means of language signs. The individual perceives that he exists from the first exercise of effort ; but it is still true that he does not have a distinct notion of his existence until he can connect the primitive judgment with a permanent sign. Similarly, in order to have a distinct notion of resistance, substance, unity, or cause, it is necessary to employ signs ; for otherwise these ideas remain confused in the groups of which they constitute the essential forms.

The treatment of words leads Maine de Biran to a further consideration of memory. He again very consistently emphasizes its active character. Intellectual memory arises from a repetition of an act of will. It has to do only with perceptions which are related to the sense of effort. Mere affections fall beyond the power of memory. They may be accompanied by intuitions or perceptions, which can be remembered and thus we can know that we have experienced pleasantness or unpleasantness, but the simple affection cannot be revived. Memory differs from imagination. The first is an active faculty which conserves ideas by means of their signs ; the second is a passive faculty which preserves traces of impressions. In every thought there is a hidden activity of the voice and the sense of hearing ; "we

speak to ourselves very softly." [1] Since the signs are voluntary movements, they become obscured by habit and are lost in the concrete perceptions. Intuitions and images occur with the memory signs, but they follow their own laws. In the exercise of memory, the representation of ideas is subordinated to the recall of voluntary signs; while in the exercise of imagination, the reproduction of images is independent of the accompanying signs. The result is that we can recall only phenomena in which we have had an active part, that is, that we ourselves have made, combined, or intentionally imitated.

Reasoning is the most important topic that comes in for consideration under the reflective system. Maine de Biran criticizes the abstract view that reasoning is mere subsumption of particular under general ideas. The deduction from general to particular presupposes that the subject of the reasoning is a general term. The process is analytic and the relation between the terms is only quantitative. But the actual judgments of external experience have individual and concrete subjects made up of diverse sensible qualities. Each judgment is a step in the analysis of the object; but the series of judgments of experience is not properly called reasoning, because there is no necessary relation between the judgments or between the series of judgments and the subject. However far induction is carried we cannot reach a necessary relation. The major premise becomes false by representing a contingent fact as an absolute truth. True reasoning, on the other hand, depends upon necessary and eternal truths, such, for example, as are found in geometry and metaphysics. The purely logical necessity found in the analysis of a general idea, a necessity which consists in fidelity to the linguistic conventions that have created a collective sign, must not be confused with the necessity which results from the nature of things. Reasoning based on general ideas is hypothetical, since it treats the resemblances, which determine the genus, as identities. Biran would agree with Hume that sciences based merely on external experience have only a descriptive validity. Moreover, each philosopher maintains that mathematics (arithmetic and algebra) has

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 248.

universal validity.[1] But they they base their doctrine on different grounds: Hume on the principle that mathematical judgments are purely analytical; Biran on the principle that they are deduced from a real fact, the resistance which meets the will. Hume denies the validity of metaphysics. Biran affirms its validity as a deductive science based on the psychological fact of effort.[2]

Reason "is the faculty of perceiving relations between simple beings or between the different attributes of the same simple being. It presupposes the faculty of conceiving or judging the existence of such a being,"[3] that is, it involves reflective acts. Under this condition the subjects are identical and not merely similar. Since the relations are independent of the modifications of sensibility we have the required characteristic of necessity. Attributes are related to subjects, not as the particular to the general, but by necessary dependence. They arise by the development of the subject. Judgments which express this dependence are synthetic. Analysis is merely a preparation which stops at the simple subjects, that is, at the starting point of reasoning. For example, by acts of abstract reflection, we reach the distinct conception of the two elements of the fact of consciousness, the self and the resistance. It is impossible to reduce these ideas of real existences by any further analysis.

After having perceived the relations of the attribute to the subject in a judgment, the mind perceives the relation of several judgments to each other, or the necessary dependence in which the several attributes stand to the same essence. "Reasoning thus consists in a succession of synthetic judgments which have a common real subject,"[4] and which are united so that the mind perceives their reciprocal dependence, without having recourse to any idea foreign to the essence of the subject.

Less abstractly stated, Maine de Biran finds that the principle: "All that is true of a . . . class is true of all the individuals comprised in the class; relates only to conditional truth. For

[1] *Cf. Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. I, Pt. III, §1.
[2] *Cf.* p. 66.
[3] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, p. 263.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 263.

classes are the work of the mind." This is the fact when it is a question of relations perceived between qualities which vary in the individuals compared. But the case is different when it is a question of universal ideas or essential attributes, that are always the same in all objects to which thought refers them, and which are necessary conditions of all possible representation. Here we are dealing not with a kind or class, but with an individual. The principle of the syllogism can then be stated as follows: "All that is true of the subject of a universal idea is necessarily and identically true of the same subject considered in any other relation or combination." [1]

Universal ideas are clearly illustrated by the science of mathematics, which, according to Maine de Biran, is not a science of conditional truth, but a science of true relations that subsist between noumena. These relations remain always the same, they are independent of all variations of sensibility, and they would not change by reason of any difference in the organization of the beings who perceive them.

Universal ideas, then, must have a basis in fact. Disregard of this necessity is the error of the philosophers who have abstracted from the foundation of reason and retained merely the form that it takes in language. By isolating the purely intellectual processes from the accompanying mental processes, they have attempted to reduce all logic to a universal algebra of ideas. But since the relations between ideas depend absolutely upon the nature of the ideas, the signs which express those relations, and consequently the logical forms which are functions of the signs, cannot be abstracted from the ideas themselves. That is, the intellectual process of determining the relation of the ideas can never be separated from the factual character of the ideas.

The actual idea includes all the attributes which make up, for us, the existence of the object, together with all the properties which the senses can discover. The coexistence of these attributes and qualities depends upon successive judgments of experience. The function of reason is to determine how all these

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 267.

properties are different expressions of the same essence. "Beginning with a primary attribute, for example, thought, or the feeling of individuality which constitutes the subject a self, or the resistance which constitutes for us what we call body, we deduce all the other attributes or modes that we know by inner feeling in the subject or by representation in the object." [1] The dependence of the idea upon the primitive fact is the first condition of reasoning. To reduce the process to a play of language is to abstract from the intellectual acts that unite judgments with each other and with immediate intuition.

The object of perception is given to the mind as simple. Perception is thus the immediate view of a simple and real subject. No further analysis can make the object itself more clearly perceived than it is by the simple fact of its immediate presence in the mind. But by abstraction from the notion of the perceived object we can discover in that notion elementary relations, which are distinguished by the aid of signs, but which are not themselves objects of perception. Thus, while we distinguish by signs the self, or effort, from resistance, there is no real perception of the self separated from the feeling of resistance. When the signs divide the totality of the object of perception into parts, the understanding sees these parts as necessarily related to the existence of the whole. Here begin perceptive judgments which develop the essence of the subject, not by making the notion more clear or distinct in itself, but by making it more adequate. They express the relation of the elements to the whole from which they are inseparable. The result is the logical composition of the object, the simple nature of which does not in reality change. All conception of necessary relation is thus connected with perceptive judgments. The possibility of correlation with perception becomes the mark which distinguishes the truth of absolute certainty from simple belief.

After the description of perceptive judgment we can easily understand Maine de Biran's conception of deduction. In his view, perceptive truths, that is, the facts of inner experience and their immediate consequences form the basis of all the work of

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 270.

the reason. The perceptive judgments are from their very nature undemonstrable. They are independent one of another, and consequently cannot be the result of any form of reasoning. But there are secondary truths which are related to each other and to the primary truths. Deduction is the process of arriving at these secondary truths and of determining their relation to fundamental truths. While the perceptive judgment is always actual, that is, it cannot be recalled without the immediate recognition of its proof, the case is different with deduced truths. When they are recalled they do not become self-evident, yet they are certain, for the intellectual memory, in recalling them, recalls at the same time their necessary dependence upon an established first principle. Without confidence in the memory no reasoning could take place; the mind would never get beyond the narrow limits of primary truths. Since the certainty of deduction is essentially different from the certainty of perception, there can be a conditional certitude without the slightest degree of absolute truth. Conditional truth only presupposes that the chain of reasoning has been regular; it has exactly the same value as the postulate from which it is deduced.

As already stated Maine de Biran makes psychology a pure deductive science. The elements of the primitive fact, when separated by reflective analysis from their synthetic union with impressions, become the true subjects of reasoning. Biran holds that all ideas which give phenomena a fixed character, or which establish necessary relations proceed from the self and not from sensations. The two terms of the fact of consciousness, effort and resistance, are the primitive and real subjects. Reduced to their essential attributes, they form the respective objects of the two sciences of pure reason, psychology and mathematics. The sciences of description and classification, which are based upon resemblances dependent upon our organism, are conditional. Natural science is truly deductive only because its facts involve the application of causal necessity.

Resistance as a factual unity is discovered by reflective abstraction. The result is the first mathematical conception. The idea is simple and individual; unity is subject or common antecedent

of all numerical relations. The judgments which have to do with that unity make up arithmetic. Geometry has its origin in the same real fact. The line is the coördination of resisting unities. In these sciences we can go on indefinitely without taking account of any foreign elements. The identical nature of the elements establishes the universal and necessary character of the relations.

Psychology is also an absolute science. It differs from mathematics in the fact that its subject (effort) admits of no schematism, or representation, similar to geometrical figures. While the self cannot be analyzed, it nevertheless occasions the reflective judgments which make up psychology. Identity, freedom, causality of the self and of the not-self, the differences between effort and its limit, are deduced from the primitive fact by a series of identical judgments. They are merely that fact seen from different points of view. Maine de Biran is never tired of insisting that it is not a question of "logical identities or of conditional truths, but of real identities, of inner facts, of absolute truths established by the inner sense." [1]

Some of the natural sciences have a certainty only secondary to that of mathematics and psychology. There are two kinds of causality to be distinguished, "efficient" and "physical." In "efficient causality," "we conceive distinctly how a cause being given in its most immediate effect . . . other facts must necessarily follow." [2] In physical causality, the cause is not given or conceived in any effect which can be its immediate expression; and "the mind is limited to observing experimentally the order of phenomenal succession." [3] Here the anterior phenomenon is the physical cause. Now in cases where there is an efficient cause as a first effect or known tendency, and we are dealing simply with this efficient cause and with the simple modes of space and time, we have certainty. This is true in regard to Newton's deduction of the system of the world, for he treated forces mathematically, not physically.

In true deductions, that is, those of the sort just mentioned, there is no presupposition; all is certain. There are, however,

[1] *Op cit.*, Vol. II, p. 324.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 330.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 331.

intellectual operations which take account of the mode of action of physical causes. The result is an explanation of a fact of experience, which has only a probable truth. In this method we always have the three steps, experience, hypothesis, and comparison of the hypothesis with the facts.

The fourth system concludes Maine de Biran's account of psychological facts. At first, he shows in detail how we arrive at an explicit perception of the self. The remainder of the section is given up to the application of the self, and of the other principles of unity which go with the perception of the self, *i. e.*, substance, and causality, to the problem of knowledge. Reason is described as depending on these ultimate factual principles. The processes of induction and deduction are evaluated and the fundamental distinction between the abstract factual notion and the general idea is again emphasized. Finally the validity of scientific knowledge is investigated and a natural classification of the sciences is presented. Before considering Biran's treatment of æsthetic, ethical, and religious problems, we shall briefly compare the psychology with the views of Condillac.

SECTION XI.

Comparison of Biran's *Psychologie* with Condillac's *Traité des sensations.*

A comparison of the psychology with Condillac's *Traité des sensations* shows the intimate relation in which Maine de Biran stood to this philosopher. It is not to depreciate Biran's originality or the value of his leading ideas that attention is called to this similarity. In the early part of the treatment it was shown in what respects Biran differed from Condillac; and constant attention has been given to the emphasis which the former placed upon the idea of activity. But here, having finished the account of the psychology, it seems necessary briefly to indicate the resemblance of that work to the *Traité des sensations.*

This similarity extends not only to the general structure of the work, but even to the solution of many important problems. First in reference to the principal divisions, we have found that Biran distinguishes four general systems under which he classifies psychological phenomena. There is the affective system which has to do with sensations abstracted from the idea of self, and with the simple modes of pleasure and pain. Then comes the sensitive system, the first in the order of consciousness, in which the self is present with the phenomena, an "interested" but inactive spectator. Next in order is the perceptive system, in which the self is an active factor in phenomena. And finally the reflective system, which treats of the active elements in consciousness without reference to the merely passive modes. Turning to the *Traité des sensations*, we find that here also are four general divisions. The first deals "with the senses which by themselves do not judge of external objects," [1] and shows "the influence of pleasures and pains." [2] The second part has to do with the commencement of the animal life, with the stage in which the statue for the first time "can speak of self," [3] and with

[1] *Traité des sensations*, p. 11.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, Ch. I, § 3.

the beginning of memory.[1] The third part relates to the judgments in regard to the external object. The fourth part shows "how we become capable of prevision and industry," "what our first judgments are concerning the goodness and beauty of things. In a word it is seen how man having been at first only a sentient animal becomes a reflective animal."[2]

The similarity of the works is still more striking when we consider the answers that are given to special questions. To take an important instance, the origin of the judgment of externality, for Maine de Biran, is found in the resistance which meets the active exercise of the sense of touch. Were it not for this sense no other forms of sensation could ever give us knowledge of the external world. Condillac had already given the same solution to the problem. The entire third part of the *Traité des sensations* describes "how touch teaches the other senses to judge of external objects." Chapter four of this part explains why we attribute to vision an independence of function which it does not in reality possess. We have seen that Maine de Biran made the judgment of externality depend upon active, not upon passive, touch. Condillac after maintaining that no knowledge of external objects can be derived from olfactory, auditory, gustatory, and visual sensations, says: "Just as certainly there would be the same ignorance with the sense of touch if it remained motionless."[3] We have then the origin of the judgment of externality explained by the same fact, the activity of the organ of touch. The difference is in the introspective account of the psychical accompaniment of the act. With Maine de Biran it is an act of a self; with Condillac it is the movement of an organism.

This is a single instance. We find the same similarity and the same difference in the accounts given of other psychological phenomena. For example, the idea of self depends according to Condillac on the sense of touch. By this sense the statue becomes more than a mere modification of sensations. According to Maine de Biran, the idea of self depends upon the fact that our effort meets a

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, Ch. XI.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

limit in the muscular sensation of our own body. The similarity is obvious. It is unnecessary to go into further detail to emphasize the close connection between Maine de Biran's philosophy and sensationalism. Each is a form of empiricism, a development of certain phases of Locke's system. Each is really a theory of knowledge which involves a realistic ontology. The great difference between Biran and Condillac is in the idea of self-activity, which is almost absent from the philosophy of the latter, while it is the leading idea in Biran's system. The supervention of the self, as an active principle, upon the phenomena of the "affective system" produces the phenomena of the "sensitive system," and it is the increasing influence of the active principle that explains the higher psychological facts. With Condillac, on the other hand, the problem is to show how the higher mental functions are built up out of pure sensations, without the intervention of any higher principle. Biran's work is in a certain sense a return from Condillac to Locke, but there is a difference between the treatment of self-activity in the philosophy of Biran and in that of Locke. With Locke reflection is merely one source of knowledge; with Biran effort is a constituent factor in all consciousness. In this respect Biran's position is an advance upon that of Condillac. But his work rather shows the difficulties in sensationalism than presents any self-consistent solution. His principle is subjective and psychological to the end. There is no satisfactory account of the universal and necessary character of the categories of thought. Biran's historical significance consists mainly in the personal influence which he exerted on Cousin.

SECTION XII.

Ethics and Æsthetics.

At this point we shall briefly consider Maine de Biran's very fragmentary account of ethics and æsthetics. In connection with the third system described above, he gives a psychological basis for ethics. He speaks approvingly of the moral sense theory. Human actions and natural phenomena affect us very differently. Although the moralist can combine under a sign different elements which are not combined in nature ; the combinations thus formed to represent real or possible action are not arbitrary, for not all elements are equally compatible with each other. The factor which determines the compatibility of elements, and so the possibility of their connection, is the natural constitution of the moral sense. Combinations which affect the moral sense in a definite manner, or form the basis of the various classes of actions, arouse particular feelings of attraction or aversion, of love or hate. The qualities or actions which are suited to excite the same feelings in the mind must have a resemblance. It is this definite reaction of human nature which constitutes the unity of a class of actions. This is the source of the common character found in the general ideas of obligation, virtue, and vice. Despite the variety of elements, all the mixed modes admit of a certain kind of real unity.

The moral constitution of man, although variously modified, displays a common character in all individuals. But owing to the variety of feelings with which moral ideas are associated, it is hopeless to attempt a rigorous application of the mathematical method. There are, however, certain limits imposed by inner experience from which moral ideas can never escape.

In the lower systems, affection precedes judgment; but the higher phenomena of the third system, *e. g.*, the consciousness of the beautiful, wonder, and admiration are consecutive to judgment. Surprise is an emotion that arises from a contrast between an earlier state of sensibility and a state which a new im-

pression tends to excite. It is strictly an emotion rather than a sentiment since it is anterior to all comparison. When surprise is very vivid fear results; when it only moderate wonder is produced. In the latter case, the subject tries to attribute the new factor to some natural cause. With success in this attempt there arises the agreeable feeling which attends the discovery of a new relation, with failure the wonder simply increases. Maine de Biran agrees that wonder is the source of science, since "it gives movement to the human mind . . . and ends by reducing to intelligence the laws which control the universe."[1] Admiration is not a kind of wonder (Descartes) through it may succeed surprise. The better we know what is great and beautiful in itself, the more we are struck with admiration. Wonder and admiration are essentially different from emotions, because they are much more closely related to ideas, yet they do not influence the ideas directly through belief. They have a certain constant character from the fact that they occur whenever attention is directed to particular relations of ideas. Emotions, on the other hand, presuppose anterior dispositions of sensibility without which they do not arise.[2]

Maine de Biran briefly traces the respective influence of the emotions and of the ideas with their related feelings on the conduct of the moral agent. The individual, who is determined by emotion, is bound to the attraction of the present pleasure; the individual, who is dominated by ideas, follows fixed lines of conduct. Attention can make an idea vivid enough to overcome the immediate impulses of sensation. Activity is thus the condition of moral preference. The guarantee of freedom is the fact that, while sensibility is limited, the power of the will is susceptible of indefinite increase. Freedom arises from the opposition which exists between the emotions and the higher feelings, and from the possibility of choice that results from that opposition.[3]

In the early part of the *Fondements de la morale et de la religion*, we have Maine de Biran's nearest approach to the formulation of an ethical system. A brief notice of this work will sup-

[1] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. II, p. 211.
[2] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 212.
[3] *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 215–216.

plement his fragmentary treatment of the moral sentiments in the psychology.

The relations of man with man are founded on a sympathy which is contemporaneous with the very existence of the individual. They are distinct from the relations which man sustains to the rest of nature. In order to be moral, the sentient and intelligent being must attribute to other beings like himself, a self, a will, and feelings and rights similar to his own. The moral consciousness "so to speak sees itself in another as in an animate mirror." [1] In this moral consciousness, the personal affections are transformed into expansive feelings. At times Biran describes this transformation as the result of sympathy in the more affective sense. He says: "The strong measures his right by his strength; the weak submits to the law of necessity. But give to the strong a feeling of sympathy and love, and he will aid rather than oppress the weak, because the suffering and oppression of his weak fellow cause him suffering." [2] And again he says: "It is first in the family that the feelings of benevolence, protection, and sympathy arise and develop." [3] At other times Biran gives a more rationalistic account of the relation of the individual and society. "What is right in the consciousness of the individual . . . becomes duty in the consciousness of the ethical person who attributes the same right to other persons." [4] The principle of all virtuous action is in the need of approval from others, "that is, from the reason itself in which all participate equally." [4] The principle of duty has nothing in common with modifications of individual sensibility, or with special relations of particular persons, but belongs to free beings in virtue of their participation "in that reason which illuminates all intelligences."

The variations in actual morality are recognized and are explained as due to failure in estimating the real significance of acts, or in finding the proper means of realizing ends. "There is at least a very general agreement in the manner of judging qualities which are truly worthy of esteem (those which tend to

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 33.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 36.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 48.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 37–38.

the perfection of the individual or the race)." [1] "There is a common principle in the diverse acts which receive the general approbation of men." [2] Morality seems relative because judgment is passed upon acts rather than upon motives.

Æsthetic ideas are closely related to moral ideas. Both classes emanate from the same active faculty of the mind; and each class is related to certain feelings which determine it, and which it always excites. The imagination can never free itself entirely from the feeling elements on which it is established. There is, however, a lesser degree of universality in æsthetic than in moral ideas; but in each case there is an absolute as well as a relative element. Beauty applies to totalities of perceptions, of images, or of intellectual ideas, which are combined in a certain order. But when we attempt to define the order more exactly we pass from general to particular ideas, and each person represents the order by the types or combinations which are most agreeable to him. Consequently there is great divergence of opinion in regard to what constitutes beauty.

The impressions which immediately affect the sensibility, such as odors, tastes, or tactual qualities, have nothing in common with the idea of the beautiful. They may be agreeable, but not beautiful. Relation with the active faculty of perception, judgment, or comparison is essential to constitute beauty. That is, a judgment is necessary to establish the feeling of the beautiful, while a simple tone or color may condition an agreeable feeling. Beauty requires a more or less extensive combination of perceptions and ideas. And a combination to be beautiful must not only be formed of perceptive elements, each of which is pleasant in itself, but there must be besides these elements a harmony, which relates or unites them, which represents to the mind a multiplicity under the form of unity. We do not know the principle in virtue of which perceptive elements form a unity. In the case of tones there is a basis for the principle in nature; but we cannot tell why the tones, the stimuli of which stand in certain numerical relations, are beautiful. And we cannot carry over the laws of harmony from the auditory into the other systems of sensation.

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 41.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 42.

Certain groups of qualities appear to us naturally beautiful, other groups do not. The fact depends upon the nature of our constitution and the natural relations of our perceptive faculty with objects. We can discover the relations in experience, but cannot explain them *a priori*. The unity, symmetry, or order, depends on laws of perception and comparison. The combinations in which these laws are observed arouse in us the feeling of the beautiful. Nature does not always satisfy the demand thus set up; the result is an ideal of beauty.

There is in art a certain amount of comparison, abstraction, and combination; but the resemblances, which determine the class of objects that the understanding unites under the same sign, differ essentially from the analogies, to which the imagination refers in satisfying the needs of the æsthetic sensibility. All the qualities which tend to excite in the mind the same feeling have the resemblance which is necessary to constitute them into a single class. In the beautiful we have a combination of means converging towards a single end.

Each art has its specific and limited domain. Painting and sculpture reach the mind by means of colors, forms, or positions. There can be only one time of action, a single situation. Their effect is consequently immediate. Music influences the mind without having recourse to images, it sets up a play of imagination which may be of indefinite duration. As our vivid feelings are developed in time, music will always have a higher value than painting and sculpture. Poetry also realizes its combinations in time.

We cannot reduce the principle of art to imitation of nature. The feelings which art arouses are inherent in human nature. Artists discover relations between these feelings and apply to them combinations of elements modeled by the imagination. It is true that some elements are derived by imitation, but the power of the artist rests in the beauty of expression, not in that of imitation. Any form of imitation carries with it the idea of limit. Art, on the other hand, turns our view toward the infinite. It makes us feel what cannot be shown in sense or represented in imagination.[1]

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 198–199.

The relation of the absolute to the relative element in art is determined in the same manner as the relation of ideas of reflection to general ideas. Relative beauty corresponds to resemblances inherent in the nature of the combined ideas, and consequently is variable. Absolute beauty refers to the forms which constitute the unity of the combination of ideas. Artistic good taste is merely the feeling of order and harmony which looks for unity in the variety of modifications. Taste is wanting, where the unity is neglected and attention is directed only to the variety and detail of sensations, *e. g.*, in the Gothic architecture, where the grandeur of the whole is sacrificed to superficial ornament, and in painting where truth of design is sacrificed to richness of color.

It is possible to accustom ourselves to combinations of sensible qualities, which lack unity, until we derive pleasure from them. An object which is not beautiful may please by association of ideas; and conversely, an object which is beautiful may not please because it is related by the imagination to some painful idea. But the rules of beauty, though they may be forgotten or unknown, are not the less eternal and invariable. Thus the external senses and the imagination are not the final judges of real beauty. The great artist by reflection and profound study finds the sources of beauty beyond the sphere of sensation in the fixed relations and proportions of parts with each other and with a unity. When he has seized the form in the abstract, he individualizes it by combinations of colors and figures which are directed to sense. The individual picture, however, possesses a real beauty which the senses alone cannot apprehend. The final product is a unity through the artist's creative imagination, not through the artificial aggregation of parts naturally dissociated. The genius can appreciate intellectual beauty, apart from any sensible manifestation, in a unity constructed by the scientific imagination, *e. g.*, in the Copernican view of the solar system. Thus a real unity of idea lies at the base of all artistic conceptions.[1]

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 204–206.

SECTION XIII.

Religion.

Before concluding our account of Maine de Biran's philosophy, we must notice the characteristics of his later development, as they are embodied in the *Anthropologie*, and in the *Fondaments de la morale et de la religion.* As already stated, Naville in his general introduction to the works of Biran distinguishes a third stage after the year 1818. But this distinction, as well as his separation of the first and second periods, seems somewhat arbitrary. It is true that questions are taken up in the later work which are not treated in the psychology. There is an increasing emphasis placed on man's wider relations to society and the world. But this is not a development of Biran's philosophy to another stage; it is rather a consideration of problems that were neglected in the psychology. The fact that his principle of self-activity does not adequately explain the ethical and religious phases of human experience is not sufficient reason for considering Biran's later work as a new stage. The truth is that his ethics and especially his philosophy of religion is incompletely and unsatisfactorily worked out. In the *Anthropologie* there is a comparison of the values of Christianity and of Stoicism. Ethics as a system of human conduct is not worked out in detail in this place. The treatment of religion is confined to the third part of the *Anthropologie*, the *Vie de l'esprit*, while the first and second parts, the *Vie animale* and the *Vie humaine*, are less detailed restatements of the position presented in the *Psychologie.*

After a somewhat minute examination of the last-named work, it will be unnecessary to go into an elaborate exposition of the *Anthropologie.* The first and second parts especially may be passed over, since we have considered them in our study of the nature of effort. Consequently we shall limit the treatment to a notice of some of the principal points of the third part.

The essential feature of the *Vie de l'esprit* is the consideration

of a third form of life, higher than the animal life or the active life of man, that is, a life "which is entirely spiritual." [1] Man stands intermediate between God and nature. In virtue of this position he possesses freedom in his activity. At a lower stage the personality of the soul is annihilated in animal life, at a higher stage it is lost in God. "Perhaps man holds in the scale of spirits the rank that the coral holds among sentient beings," [2] but man is endowed with an activity by which he can rise in the scale. The second life is given to man as a means to the third, in which he is free from the bondage of the affections and passions. Christianity alone reveals to man this third life above human sensibility, reason, or will. Stoicism did not get beyond the second life and exaggerated the power of the will and of reason over the passions and affections of the sensitive life. But there is something more to be explained, that is, "the absorption of the reason and the will in a supreme force, an absorption which without effort establishes a state of perfection and happiness." [3] "This is the mystical life of enthusiasm, the highest degree to which the soul can attain in identifying itself with its supreme object." [4] The necessity of the second life, as a means to the realization of the third, is emphasized. The absorption is described as "calm" succeeding "storms," and as "repose of the soul after and not before effort." [5] But, on the other hand, it is not absolutely in the power of the soul to pass from an inferior to a superior stage. The individual "needs a support beyond himself. Religion comes to his aid." [6]

The work of the year 1818, *De la morale et de la religion*, gives a proof for the existence of God. "The principle of causality is in us, and by establishing this principle in its source and applying it with a sane reason, we can rise from the personality of the self, which is a relative and particular cause effecting bodily movement, to the personality of God, which is the absolute and

[1] *Œuvres inédites*, Vol. III, p. 517.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 517.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 520.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 521.
[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 525.
[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 531.

universal cause of the order of the world and of his own existence." [1] Religion, for Maine de Biran, depends upon morality for its content in the sense that while morality is independent of religion, the latter "presupposes a moral sentiment or relation of sympathy and love between sentient feeble beings and the supreme cause on which they depend for their modifications and even for their existence." [2]

A review of the main facts of this section shows clearly that the idea of will is involved throughout the philosophy of religion, and thus invalidates a complete separation between Biran's second and third periods. The life of activity is a necessary means to the religious life. The proof for the existence of God is based directly on will. The personality of God is thought after the analogy of the personality of the self. And finally in the last quotation, the third, or religious, form of life is explicitly made dependent upon morality. The element of mysticism which does appear in Biran's latter writings is not made a leading principle of explanation. It is, however, an important supplement to the idea of activity in the account of social and religious phenomena.

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 52.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 48.

SECTION XIV.

Biran's Relation to Subsequent Thinkers: Cousin, Comte, Renouvier, and Fouillée.

In conclusion it seems fitting to consider very briefly the place that Biran holds in the subsequent philosophy of his country. It would, however, be impossible within the present limits to make an exhaustive study of his influence upon later writers. Consequently this section will be devoted to a consideration of his relation to a few of the typical leaders of thought during the last century. And in this way a general view of his historical position may be gained.

Maine de Biran is more closely related to Cousin than to any other subsequent philosopher. Biran's work, however, is only one of the many sources from which the head of the eclectic philosophy drew in constructing his system. And in this, as in other instances, Cousin did not borrow uncritically from an earlier thinker; but aimed to found his work upon observation of facts and induction. We are very fortunate in regard to our knowledge of the relation between Biran and Cousin. The latter has left us a very careful criticism of Biran's doctrine of the direct perception of the self through experiences of will or effort. Cousin's criticism is all the more valuable because there is no circumstance which could have induced him to accentuate the differences between his own position and that of Biran. Not only were the philosophers compatriots, but the finest personal relation subsisted between the elder and the younger man. Further, the strenuous advocacy of the freedom of the will would tend to draw them closer together. Finally, Cousin was the first to edit the works of Biran and thus to introduce him to the philosophical world. The consideration of these facts lends a peculiar interest to the criticism.

Cousin finds that Biran was right in emphasizing personality and in showing the identity between will and attention. More-

over, the account of the origin of the idea of causality is correct. But Biran was wrong in attempting to identify the will with personality. The greatest error, however, was in neglecting the distinction between the idea of causality and the principle of causality. The former is developed in experience, while the latter is a truth to which reason is naturally subject.

Cousin's estimate of Biran's theory of will is most carefully worked out in connection with an examination of Locke's idea of power. In this connection Cousin shows the intimate relation between Locke and Biran. As the empirical character of Biran's philosophy has been one of the main theses which we have tried to present, we have a double reason for looking at Cousin's work: first, because it substantiates our general position, and secondly, because it shows the exact relation between Biran and eclecticism. Cousin's view of Biran's philosophy of will as well as his statement of its defects is brought out clearly in the following quotations: "The distinguishing merit of M. de Biran is in having established that the will is the constituent characteristic of our personality. He has gone farther — too far, perhaps. As Locke confounded consciousness and memory with personality and identity of self, M. de Biran has gone even so far as to confound the will with personality itself. It is certainly the eminent characteristic of it, so that the idea of cause, which is given in the consciousness of the productive will, is for that reason given in the consciousness of our personality." [1]

"In short, this cause, which is ourselves, is implied in every fact of consciousness. The necessary condition of every phenomenon perceived by consciousness is that we pay attention to it. If we do not bestow our attention, the phenomenon may perhaps still exist, but the consciousness not connecting itself with it, and not taking knowledge of it, it is for us a non-existence. Attention then is the condition of every appreciation of consciousness. Now attention, as I have more than once shown, is the will. The condition, then, of every phenomenon of consciousness, and of course of the first phenomenon, as of all others, is the will, and as the will is the causative power, it follows that in the first fact

[1] *Elements of Psychology* (trans. 4th ed. by C. S. Henry), p. 183.

of consciousness, and in order that this fact may take place, there must necessarily be the apperception of our own causality in the will, from whence it follows again that the idea of cause is the primary idea; that the apperception of the voluntary cause which we ourselves are is the first of all apperceptions, and the condition of all others.

"Such is the theory to which M. de Biran has raised that of Locke. I adopt it. I believe that it perfectly accounts for the idea of cause. But it remains to inquire whether the idea of cause . . . suffices . . . to explain the principle of causality. For Locke, who treats of the idea of cause, but never of the principle of causality, the problem did not even exist. M. de Biran, who scarcely proposes it, resolves it by far too rapidly, and arrives at once at a result, the only one permitted by Locke's theory and by his own, but which sound psychology and sound logic cannot accept.

"According to M. de Biran, after we have derived the idea of cause from the sentiment of our own personal activity, in the phenomenon of effort, of which we are conscious, we transfer this idea outwardly; we project it into the external world, by virtue of an operation which, with Royer-Collard, he has called *natural induction*."[1] But this view is unsatisfactory, because "The peculiar character of induction . . . is . . . in the contrast of the identity of the phenomenon or of the law, and of the diversity of the circumstances from which it is first derived and then transferred. If, then, the knowledge of external causes is only an induction from our personal cause, it is in strictness our causality, the voluntary and free cause which ourselves constitute, that should be transferred by induction into the external world. . . . From whence it follows that it is our own causality we should be obliged to suppose wherever a phenomenon begins to appear: that is to say, all the causes which we subsequently conceive are and can be nothing but our own personality."[2]

This thought is developed still further to show the insufficiency of Biran's treatment of the principle of causality. "The

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 183–184.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 185–186.

belief in the external world and in external causes is universal and necessary; and the fact which explains it ought itself to be universal and necessary; if therefore our belief in the world and in external causes resolves itself into the assimilation of these causes to ours, this assimilation ought likewise to be universal and necessary. Now at this point I have recourse to psychology. . . . We all have a perfect conviction that the world exists, that there are external causes. These causes we believe to be neither personal, nor intentional, nor voluntary. . . . But if this belief is universal and necessary, the judgment which includes it and gives it ought to have a principle which is itself universal and necessary: and this principle is nothing else than the principle of causality. . . . Take away the principle of causality, and whenever a phenomenon appeared upon the theater of consciousness, of which we were not the cause, there would no longer be a ground for our demanding a cause for the phenomenon. . . . But on the contrary, assume the principle of causality (as potentially existing in the mind), and as soon as the phenomenon of sensation begins to appear on the theater of consciousness, at the same instant the principle of causality (actually unfolded and put in exercise by the occasion of the phenomenon), marks it with this character that it cannot but have a cause. Now as consciousness attests that this cause is not ourselves, and yet it remains not less certain that it must have a cause, it follows that there is a cause *other* than ourselves, and which is neither personal nor voluntary, and yet it is a cause, that is to say, a cause simply efficient." [1]

Cousin finds a certain partial truth in Biran's account of will but regards that account as inadequate. He says: "I admit, I am decidedly of the opinion that the consciousness of our own proper causality precedes any conception of the principle of causality, and of course precedes any application of that principle, any knowledge of external causality." [2] Genetically the knowledge of causality is discovered by an act of will. But the principle of causality is made logically prior to the particular

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 187–189.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

example of the principle in voluntary activity. Cousin works out the distinction as follows: "The process by which in the depths of the mind the passage is made from the primary fact of consciousness to the ulterior fact of the conception of the principle is this. I wish to move my arm and I move it. . . . This fact, when analyzed, gives three elements: (1) Consciousness of a volition which is my own, which is personal; (2) a motion produced; (3) and finally, a reference of this motion to my will . . . a relation of production, of causation; a relation too, which I no more call in question, than I do either of the other two terms, and without which the other two terms are not given; so that the three terms are given in one single and indivisible fact, which fact is the consciousness of my personal causality. . . .

"This fact . . . is characterized by being particular, individual, determinate. . . . Again, it is characteristic of everything particular and determinate, to be susceptible of the degrees of more or less. I myself, a voluntary cause, have at such a moment more or less energy, which makes the motion produced by me have more or less force. But does the feeblest motion pertain any less to me than the most energetic? Is there between the the cause, myself, and the effect, motion, a less relation in the one case than in the other? Not at all, the two terms may vary, and do vary perpetually in intensity, but the relation does not vary. Still further, the two terms . . . may even not exist at all. . . . But the relation between these two determinate, variable, and contingent terms, is neither variable nor contingent. It is universal and necessary. The moment the consciousness seizes these two terms, the reason seizes their relation, and by an immediate abstraction which needs not the support of a great number of similar facts, it disengages the invariable and necessary element of the fact from its variable and contingent elements. . . . Reason, then, is subject to this truth, it is under an impossibility of not supposing a cause, whenever the senses or the consciousness reveal any motion or phenomenon. Now this impossibility, to which the reason is subjected, of not supposing a cause for every phenomenon, . . . is what we call the principle of causality. . . . Now it is with the principle of causality as

with other principles; never would the human mind have conceived it in its universality and necessity, if at first there had not been given us a particular fact of causation; and this primitive and particular fact is that of our own proper and personal causality, manifested to the consciousness in an effort, in a voluntary act. But this does not suffice of itself wholly to explain the knowledge of external causes, because we should have to regard external causes as only an induction from our own causality." [1]

The extended quotations already given and the importance of the subject alike require that we should look at the passage in which Cousin sums up his criticism of Biran. It is as follows: "Gifted with extraordinary psychological insight, M. de Biran penetrated so far into the intimacy of the fact of consciousness by which the first idea of cause is given, that he scarcely disengaged himself from that fact and that idea, and neglected too much the principle of causality; thus confounding, as Locke has done, the antecedent of a principle with the principle itself; or when he attempted to explain the principle of causality, he explained it by a *natural induction* which transfers to the external world consciousness, the will and all the peculiar attributes of his model; confounding in this way a particular, transient, and erroneous application of the principle of causality, with the principle in itself. . . . The theory of M. de Biran is the development of the theory of Locke. It reproduces that theory with more extent and profoundness, and exhausts at once both its merits and its defects." [1]

While the question of the relation of Cousin to Biran is logically distinct from the question concerning Cousin's estimate of his debt to his predecessor, I believe they are practically coincident. If this is correct, in the view that the idea of causality becomes explicit in the fact of volition, that is, that it is genetically (though not logically) derived from the act of will, we have the important thought which Cousin accepted from Biran's theory of will. Taking causality as a typical example, it may be said that while Biran derives the intellectual categories from a psy-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 190–194.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

chological fact, Cousin makes them universal laws of reason. A general view of Cousin's treatment of causality suggests the conclusion that Biran's influence on early eclecticism has been overemphasized.

Passing from the system which stands in closest relation to Biran's work to that which is most antithetical, positivism, we can dismiss our subject much more briefly. We have here no extended criticism for examination, and need only note the divergence in method and in general attitude to philosophical questions. We have, then, not so much to trace a relation as to show the absence of any intimate relation between Biran and Comte. Biran, we have seen, was individualistic in attitude and pursued a psychological method. Comte, on the other hand, was socialistic in attitude and employed a method which was derived from and suited to include the other sciences, but which left no place for psychology in Biran's sense of that term. It is unnecessary to carry the comparison further. The contrasted positions will be shown by a notice of Comte's views on some questions which we have seen were important for Biran.

With Comte any attempt to seek for a metaphysical basis from which the postulates of the various sciences could be deduced marked a return to a more primitive method of thought. He could consequently have no sympathy with a system like that of Biran which was founded on an ultimate fact discovered in experience. For positivism science is its own end; and any law of the relation of the sciences must be discovered in the history of scientific development rather than in some isolated fact. Starting with this view of "the powerlessness of metaphysical methods for the study of moral and intellectual phenomena," Comte notes the general "absurdity of the supposition of a man seeing himself think." He then finds further difficulties in the method of "*interior observation.*" "It is at once evident that no function can be studied but with relation to the organ that fulfils it, or to the phenomena of its fulfilment: and in the second place, that the affective functions, and yet more the intellectual, exhibit in the latter respect this particular characteristic — that they cannot be observed during their operation, but only in their

results, more or less immediate and more or less durable." The psychological method does not study the organic conditions nor the intellectual acts, and thus by neglecting "both the agent and the act," it is lost in "an unintelligible conflict of words, in which merely nominal entities are substituted for real phenomena." We have seen that Biran also often speaks against the substitution of abstractions for realities, and it is necessary to see clearly what is meant. Biran's ultimate reality, the self discovered in effort, is for Comte merely a "nominal entity," while agent is made equivalent to "organic condition."

Comte objects further to the "radical separation which it was thought necessary to make between brutes and man" and "the necessity that the metaphysicians found themselves under, of preserving the unity of what they call the I, that it might correspond with the unity of the *soul*." For "it is probable that among the superior animals the sense of personality is still more marked than in man, on account of their more isolated life." [1]

It might seem to the casual observer that there is one resemblance between the systems, in the fact that positivism makes the affective, prior to the intellectual, life. But even this point of similarity is not valid, because Biran sharply distinguishes will and desire. We may say then that Biran had no influence on positivism.

Having considered Maine de Biran's relation to eclecticism and to positivism, we shall conclude by noting the estimate in which he is held by contemporary writers. First, let us see how he fits into Renouvier's historical scheme. The neo-critic thinks that both eclecticism and positivism were inadaquate reactions against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. The former sought to rediscover the "lofty philosophical traditions" of the seventeenth century, the latter aimed at their "total abandonment confident of replacing them by a more certain method." But neither was alive to "the necessity of studying the nature of the principles of knowledge." [2]

Biran was a true child of his time. Although he passed with

[1] Martineau, *Comte's Positive Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp. 331, 334.
[2] *Histoire et solution des problèmes métaphysiques*, pp. 415–417.

the eclectics as the discoverer of Leibnitz, he really emphasized only the principle of activity, while he did not even understand the doctrine of preëstablished harmony.[1] Still retaining his realistic position, he made the will a force of our own "of which we have at the same time thought and external perception with the certitude of its action, as a cause producing organic movement." [2]

It is easy to see how slight Biran's influence has been on neo-criticism. Both Biran and Renouvier are strenuous advocates of free will. But for the former it is a fact given in experience, which we cannot doubt any more than we can doubt the existence of the self. Renouvier, on the other hand, "rests the thesis of free will, not with the eclectics on the vain affirmation of an inner experience which we have of it, a confusion between the real experience of our feeling on this point and the experience which it is necessary we should have and which we never do have of the relation of this feeling with the truth," but on a psychological analysis of the act of deliberation, on the evident fallacy in employing the principle of contradiction to prove that all future events are determined, and on a study of the concept of cause.[3] We are forced to conclude that Biran had very little direct influence on the work of Renouvier.

We will consider one more estimate of Biran, made by another contemporary writer on will philosophy. Fouillée speaks of Biran as the one who reëstablished dynamism in man and nature "but under the doubtful form of motor force" and who "had only a very mystical idea" of "the sphere of ideal freedom." He says: "much of French philosophy agrees with Maine de Biran and with German philosophy in supposing that beyond logical mechanism and sensible reality there is a region of freedom which is at the same time a region of love understood in the true sense." [4]

It is clear, however, that Fouillée does not accept the theory of a "true motor force," as Biran employed the term, for he criticises an error of the "partisans of the objectivity of the self."

[1] *Cf. op. cit.*, p. 414.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 456–457.
[3] *Cf. ibid*, pp. 437–438.
[4] *La liberté et le déterminisme*, p. 341.

They confuse the two meanings of the "idea of the self" which can stand for either "the reflective idea of the self" which "is only a distinct manifestation of our thought, and contrasted with our existence" or "the immediate consciousness of being, of sensation, and of thought." [1] Fouillée finds that "the most that can be accorded to man, is simply a vague consciousness of force or universal will which acts in us as in others, this pretended consciousness of the universal is without doubt only a pure idea." "If we thus have consciousness of any freedom, it is not of *our* individual freedom, but of *freedom* of absolute unity superior to our own individuality. In this case I am free precisely where I am no longer *self*. While as a *self*, as a being distinct and determinate, I am determined both in my action and in my existence, I am caught in the net of universal determinism." [2]

When we compare this quotation with Biran's idea of freedom, we cannot claim that Fouillée with his doctrine of the "force of the idea of freedom" as a means of reconciliation between liberty and determinism, really owes any considerable debt to the earlier philosopher.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 77.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

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